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THE COMEDY OF HUMAN LIFE

By H. DE BALZAC

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI



J. Waſſer

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Procédé Goupil

The Guises in Catherine's Chamber.

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THE WORKS
OF
HONORÉ DE BALZAC

TRANSLATED BY
KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

VOLUME XVIII

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI
LOUIS LAMBERT. FACINO CANE
GAMBARA
MELMOTH ABSOLVED

Illustrated
By PAUL AVRIL, J. WAGREZ, AND GEORGES CAIN

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
BOSTON



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JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

TO MONSIEUR LE MARQUIS DE PASTORET, MEMBER OF THE
ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS.

WHEN we think of the enormous number of volumes that have been published on the question as to where Hannibal crossed the Alps, without our being able to decide to-day whether it was (according to Whittaker and Rivaz) by Lyon, Geneva, the Great Saint-Bernard, and the valley of Aosta; or (according to Letronne, Follard, Saint-Simon, and Fortia d'Urbano) by the Isère, Grenoble, Saint-Bonnet, Monte Genevra, Fenestrella, and the Susa passage; or (according to Larauza) by the Mont Cenis and the Susa; or (according to Strabo, Polybius, and Lucanus) by the Rhone, Vienne, Yenne,

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JOHN WILSON AND :

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And let me remark, in passing, that Hannibal's crossing has been made almost problematical by these very elucidations. For instance, Père Menestrier thinks that the Scoras mentioned by Polybius is the Saône ; Letronne, Larauza and Schweighauser think it the Isère ; Cochard, a learned Lyon-nais, calls it the Drôme, and for all who have eyes to see there are between Scoras and Scrivia great geographical and linguistical resemblances, — to say nothing of the probability, amounting almost to certainty, that the Carthaginian fleet

was moored in the Gulf of Spezzia or the roadstead of Genoa. I could understand these patient researches if there were any doubt as to the battle of Canna; but inasmuch as the results of that battle are known, why blacken paper with all these suppositions (which are, as it were, the arabesques of hypothesis) while the history most important to the present day, that of the Reformation, is full of such obscurities that we are ignorant of the real name of the man who navigated a vessel by steam to Barcelona at the period when Luther and Calvin were inaugurating the insurrection of thought.¹

You and I hold, I think, the same opinion, after having made, each in his own way, close researches as to the grand and splendid figure of Catherine de' Medici. Consequently, I have thought that my historical studies upon that queen might properly be dedicated to an author who has written so much on the history of the Reformation; while at the same time I offer to the character and fidelity of a monarchical writer a public homage which may, perhaps, be valuable on account of its rarity.

¹ The name of the man who tried this experiment at Barcelona should be given as Salomon de Caux, not Caus. That great man has always been unfortunate; even after his death his name is mangled. Salomon, whose portrait taken at the age of forty-six was discovered by the author of the "Comedy of Human Life" at Heidelberg, was born at Caux in Normandy. He was the author of a book entitled "The Causes of moving Forces," in which he gave the theory of the expansion and condensation of steam. He died in 1635.

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CATHERINE DE' MEDICI.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a general cry of paradox when scholars, struck by some historical error, attempt to correct it; but, for whoever studies modern history to its depths, it is plain that historians are privileged liars, who lend their pen to popular beliefs precisely as the newspapers of the day, or most of them, express the opinions of their readers.

Historical independence has shown itself much less among lay writers than among those of the Church. It is from the Benedictines, one of the glories of France, that the purest light has come to us in the matter of history, — so long, of course, as the interests of the order were not involved. About the middle of the eighteenth century great and learned controversialists, struck by the necessity of correcting popular errors endorsed by historians, made and published to the world very remarkable works. Thus Monsieur de Launoy, nicknamed the “Expeller of Saints,” made cruel war upon the saints surreptitiously smuggled into the Church. Thus the emulators of the Benedictines, the members (too little recognized) of the Académie

des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, began on many obscure historical points a series of monographs, which are admirable for patience, erudition, and logical consistency. Thus Voltaire, for a mistaken purpose and with ill-judged passion, frequently cast the light of his mind on historical prejudices. Diderot undertook in this direction a book (much too long) on the era of imperial Rome. If it had not been for the French Revolution, *criticism* applied to history might then have prepared the elements of a good and true history of France, the proofs for which had long been gathered by the Benedictines. Louis XVI., a just mind, himself translated the English work in which Walpole endeavored to explain Richard III., — a work much talked of in the last century.

Why do personages so celebrated as kings and queens, so important as the generals of armies, become objects of horror or derision? Half the world hesitates between the famous song on Marlborough and the history of England, and it also hesitates between history and popular tradition as to Charles IX. At all epochs when great struggles take place between the masses and authority, the populace creates for itself an *ogre-esque* personage — if it is allowable to coin a word to convey a just idea. Thus, to take an example in our own time, if it had not been for the “Memorial of Saint Helena,” and the controversies between the Royalists and the Bonapartists, there was every probability that the character of Napoleon would have been misunderstood. A few more Abbé de Pradts, a few more newspaper articles, and from being an emperor, Napoleon would have turned into an ogre.

How does error propagate itself? The mystery is accomplished under our very eyes without our perceiving it. No one suspects how much solidity the art of printing has given both to the envy which pursues greatness, and to the popular ridicule which fastens a contrary sense on a grand historical act. Thus, the name of the Prince de Polignac is given throughout the length and breadth of France to all bad horses that require whipping; and who knows how that will affect the opinion of the future as to the *coup d'État* of the Prince de Polignac himself? In consequence of a whim of Shakespeare — or perhaps it may have been a revenge, like that of Beaumarchais on Bergasse (Bergearss) — Falstaff is, in England, a type of the ridiculous; his very name provokes laughter; he is the king of clowns. Now, instead of being enormously pot-bellied, absurdly amorous, vain, drunken, old, and corrupted, Falstaff was one of the most distinguished men of his time, a Knight of the Garter, holding a high command in the army. At the accession of Henry V. Sir John Falstaff was only thirty-four years old. This general, who distinguished himself at the battle of Agincourt, and there took prisoner the Duc d'Alençon, captured, in 1420, the town of Montereau, which was vigorously defended. Moreover, under Henry VI. he defeated ten thousand French troops with fifteen hundred weary and famished men.

So much for war. Now let us pass to literature, and see our own Rabelais, a sober man who drank nothing but water, but is held to be, nevertheless, an extravagant lover of good cheer and a resolute drinker. A thousand ridiculous stories are told about the author of one of the finest books in French literature, — “Panta-

gruel." Aretino, the friend of Titian, and the Voltaire of his century, has, in our day, a reputation the exact opposite of his works and of his character; a reputation which he owes to a grossness of wit in keeping with the writings of his age, when broad farce was held in honor, and queens and cardinals wrote tales which would be called, in these days, licentious. One might go on multiplying such instances indefinitely.

In France, and that, too, during the most serious epoch of modern history, no woman, unless it be Brune-haut or Fredegonde, has suffered from popular error so much as Catherine de' Medici; whereas Marie de' Medici, all of whose actions were prejudicial to France, has escaped the shame which ought to cover her name. Marie de' Medici wasted the wealth amassed by Henry IV.; she never purged herself of the charge of having known of the king's assassination; her *intimate* was d'Épernon, who did not ward off Ravaiiac's blow, and who was proved to have known the murderer personally for a long time. Marie's conduct was such that she forced her son to banish her from France, where she was encouraging her other son, Gaston, to rebel; and the victory Richelieu at last won over her (on the Day of the Dupes) was due solely to the discovery the cardinal made, and imparted to Louis XIII., of secret documents relating to the death of Henri IV.

Catherine de' Medici, on the contrary, saved the crown of France; she maintained the royal authority in the midst of circumstances under which more than one great prince would have succumbed. Having to make head against factions and ambitions like those of the Guises and the house of Bourbon, against men such as

the two Cardinals of Lorraine, the two Balafrés, and the two Condés, against the queen Jeanne d'Albret, Henri IV., the Connétable de Montmorency, Calvin, the three Colignys, Théodore de Bèze, she needed to possess and to display the rare qualities and precious gifts of a statesman under the mocking fire of the Calvinist press.

Those facts are incontestable. Therefore, to whosoever burrows into the history of the sixteenth century in France, the figure of Catherine de' Medici will seem like that of a great king. When calumny is once dissipated by facts, recovered with difficulty from among the contradictions of pamphlets and false anecdotes, all explains itself to the fame of this extraordinary woman, who had none of the weaknesses of her sex, who lived chaste amid the license of the most dissolute court in Europe, and who, in spite of her lack of money, erected noble public buildings, as if to repair the loss caused by the iconoclasms of the Calvinists, who did as much harm to art as to the body politic. Hemmed in between the Guises who claimed to be the heirs of Charlemagne and the factious younger branch who sought to screen the treachery of the Connétable de Bourbon behind the throne, Catherine, forced to combat heresy which was seeking to annihilate the monarchy, without friends, aware of treachery among the leaders of the Catholic party, foreseeing a republic in the Calvinist party, Catherine employed the most dangerous but the surest weapon of public policy,—craft. She resolved to trick and so defeat, successively, the Guises who were seeking the ruin of the house of Valois, the Bourbons who sought the crown, and the Reformers (the Radicals of

those days) who dreamed of an impossible republic—like those of our time; who have, however, nothing to reform. Consequently, so long as she lived, the Valois kept the throne of France. The great historian of that time, de Thou, knew well the value of this woman when, on hearing of her death, he exclaimed: “It is not a woman, it is monarchy itself that has died!”

Catherine had, in the highest degree, the sense of royalty, and she defended it with admirable courage and persistency. The reproaches which Calvinist writers have cast upon her are to her glory; she incurred them by reason only of her triumphs. Could she, placed as she was, triumph otherwise than by craft? The whole question lies there.

As for violence, that means is one of the most disputed questions of public policy; in our time it has been answered on the Place Louis XV., where they have now set up an Egyptian stone, as if to obliterate regicide and offer a symbol of the system of materialistic policy which governs us; it was answered at the Carmes and at the Abbaye; answered on the steps of Saint-Roch; answered once more by the people against the king before the Louvre in 1830, as it has since been answered by Lafayette's best of all possible republics against the republican insurrection at Saint-Merri and the rue Transnonnain. All power, legitimate or illegitimate, must defend itself when attacked; but the strange thing is that where the people are held heroic in their victory over the nobility, power is called murderous in its duel with the people. If it succumbs after its appeal to force, power is then called imbecile. The present government is attempting to save itself by

two laws from the same evil Charles X. tried to escape by two ordinances; is it not a bitter derision? Is craft permissible in the hands of power against craft? may it kill those who seek to kill it? The massacres of the Revolution have replied to the massacres of Saint-Bartholomew. The people, become king, have done against the king and the nobility what the king and the nobility did against the insurgents of the sixteenth century. Therefore the popular historians, who know very well that in a like case the people will do the same thing over again, have no excuse for blaming Catherine de' Medici and Charles IX.

"All power," said Casimir Perier, on learning what power ought to be, "is a permanent conspiracy." We admire the anti-social maxims put forth by daring writers; why, then, this disapproval which, in France, attaches to all social truths when boldly proclaimed? This question will explain, in itself alone, historical errors. Apply the answer to the destructive doctrines which flatter popular passions, and to the conservative doctrines which repress the mad efforts of the people, and you will find the reason of the unpopularity and also the popularity of certain personages. Laubardemont and Laffemas were, like some men of to-day, devoted to the defence of power in which they believed. Soldiers or judges, they all obeyed royalty. In these days d'Orthèz would be dismissed for having misunderstood the orders of the ministry, but Charles X. left him governor of a province. The power of the many is accountable to no one; the power of one is compelled to render account to its subjects, to the great as well as to the small.

Catherine, like Philip the Second and the Duke of Alba, like the Guises and Cardinal Granvelle, saw plainly the future that the Reformation was bringing upon Europe. She and they saw monarchies, religion, authority shaken. Catherine wrote, from the cabinet of the kings of France, a sentence of death to that spirit of inquiry which then began to threaten modern society; a sentence which Louis XIV. ended by executing. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was an unfortunate measure only so far as it caused the irritation of all Europe against Louis XIV. At another period England, Holland, and the Holy Roman Empire would not have welcomed banished Frenchmen and encouraged revolt in France.

Why refuse, in these days, to the majestic adversary of the most barren of heresies the grandeur she derived from the struggle itself? Calvinists have written much against the "craftiness" of Charles IX.; but travel through France, see the ruins of noble churches, estimate the fearful wounds given by the religionists to the social body, learn what vengeance they inflicted, and you will ask yourself, as you deplore the evils of individualism (the disease of our present France, the germ of which was in the questions of liberty of conscience then agitated), — you will ask yourself, I say, on which side were the executioners. There are, unfortunately, as Catherine herself says in the third division of this Study of her career, "in all ages hypocritical writers always ready to weep over the fate of two hundred scoundrels killed necessarily." Cæsar, who tried to move the senate to pity the attempt of Catiline, might perhaps have got the better of Cicero could he have had an Opposition and its newspapers at his command.

Another consideration explains the historical and popular disfavor in which Catherine is held. The Opposition in France has always been Protestant, because it has had no policy but that of *negation*; it inherits the theories of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Protestants on the terrible words "liberty," "tolerance," "progress," and "philosophy." Two centuries have been employed by the opponents of power in establishing the doubtful doctrine of the *libre arbitre*,—liberty of will. Two other centuries were employed in developing the first corollary of liberty of will, namely, liberty of conscience. Our century is endeavoring to establish the second, namely, political liberty.

Placed between the ground already lost and the ground still to be defended, Catherine and the Church proclaimed the salutary principle of modern societies, *una fides, unus dominus*, using their power of life and death upon the innovators. Though Catherine was vanquished, succeeding centuries have proved her justification. The product of liberty of will, religious liberty, and political liberty (not, observe this, to be confounded with civil liberty) is the France of to-day. What is the France of 1840? A country occupied exclusively with material interests, — without patriotism, without conscience; where power has no vigor; where election, the fruit of liberty of will and political liberty, lifts to the surface none but commonplace men; where brute force has now become a necessity against popular violence; where discussion, spreading into everything, stifles the action of legislative bodies; where money rules all questions; where individualism — the dreadful product of the division of property *ad infinitum*

tum — will suppress the family and devour all, even the nation, which egoism will some day deliver over to invasion. Men will say, “Why not the Czar?” just as they said, “Why not the Duc d’Orléans? We don’t cling to many things even now; but fifty years hence we shall cling to nothing.

Thus, according to Catherine de’ Medici and according to all those who believe in a well-ordered society, in *social man*, the subject cannot have liberty of will, ought not to *teach* the dogma of liberty of conscience, or demand political liberty. But, as no society can exist without guarantees granted to the subject against the sovereign, there results for the subject *liberties* subject to restriction. Liberty, no; liberties, yes, — precise and well-defined liberties. That is in harmony with the nature of things.

It is, assuredly, beyond the reach of human power to prevent the liberty of thought; and no sovereign can interfere with money. The great statesmen who were vanquished in the long struggle (it lasted five centuries) recognized the right of subjects to great liberties; but they did not admit their right to publish anti-social thoughts, nor did they admit the indefinite liberty of the subject. To them the words “subject” and “liberty” were terms that contradicted each other; just as the theory of citizens being all equal constitutes an absurdity which nature contradicts at every moment. To recognize the necessity of a religion, the necessity of authority, and then to leave to subjects the right to deny religion, attack its worship, oppose the exercise of power by public expression communicable and communicated by thought, was an impossibility which the Catholics of the sixteenth century would not hear of.

Alas ! the victory of Calvinism will cost France more in the future than it has yet cost her ; for religious sects and humanitarian, equality-levelling politics are, to-day, the tail of Calvinism ; and, judging by the mistakes of the present power, its contempt for intellect, its love for material interests, in which it seeks the basis of its support (though material interests are the most treacherous of all supports), we may predict that unless some providence intervenes, the genius of destruction will again carry the day over the genius of preservation. The assailants, who have nothing to lose and all to gain, understand each other thoroughly ; whereas their rich adversaries will not make any sacrifice either of money or self-love to draw to themselves supporters.

The art of printing came in aid of the opposition begun by the Vaudois and the Albigenses. As soon as human thought, instead of condensing itself, as it was formerly forced to do to remain in communicable form, took on a multitude of garments and became, as it were, the people itself, instead of remaining a sort of axiomatic divinity, there were two multitudes to combat, — the multitude of ideas, and the multitude of men. The royal power succumbed in that warfare, and we are now assisting, in France, at its last combination with elements which render its existence difficult, not to say impossible. Power is action, and the elective principle is discussion. There is no policy, no statesmanship possible where discussion is permanent.

Therefore we ought to recognize the grandeur of the woman who had the eyes to see this future and fought it bravely. That the house of Bourbon was able to succeed to the house of Valois, that it found a crown

preserved to it, was due solely to Catherine de' Medici. Suppose the second Balafre had lived? No matter how strong the Béarnais was, it is doubtful whether he could have seized the crown, seeing how dearly the Duc de Mayenne and the remains of the Guise party sold it to him. The means employed by Catherine, who certainly had to reproach herself with the deaths of François II. and Charles IX., whose lives might both have been saved in time, were never, it is observable, made the subject of accusations by either the Calvinists or modern historians. Though there was no poisoning, as some grave writers have said, there was other conduct almost as criminal; there is no doubt she hindered Paré from saving one, and allowed the other to accomplish his own doom by moral assassination. But the sudden death of François II., and that of Charles IX., were no injury to the Calvinists, and therefore the causes of these two events remained in their secret sphere, and were never suspected either by the writers or the people of that day; they were not divined except by de Thou, l'Hôpital, and minds of that calibre, or by the leaders of the two parties who were coveting or defending the throne, and believed such means necessary to their end.

Popular songs attacked, strangely enough, Catherine's morals. Every one knows the anecdote of the soldier who was roasting a goose in the courtyard of the château de Tours during the conference between Catherine and Henri IV., singing, as he did so, a song in which the queen was grossly insulted. Henri IV., drew his sword to go out and kill the man; but Catherine stopped him and contented herself with calling from the window to her insulter: —

“Eh! but it was Catherine who gave you the goose.”

Though the executions at Amboise were attributed to Catherine, and though the Calvinists made her responsible for all the inevitable evils of that struggle, it was with her as it was, later, with Robespierre, who is still waiting to be justly judged. Catherine was, moreover, rightly punished for her preference for the Duc d'Anjou, to whose interests the two elder brothers were sacrificed. Henri III., like all spoilt children, ended in becoming absolutely indifferent to his mother, and he plunged voluntarily into the life of debauchery which made of him what his mother had made of Charles IX., a husband without sons, a king without heirs. Unhappily the Duc d'Alençon, Catherine's last male child, had already died, a natural death.

The last words of the great queen were like a summing up of her lifelong policy, which was, moreover, so plain in its common-sense that all cabinets are seen under similar circumstances to put it in practice.

“Enough cut off, my son,” she said when Henri III. came to her death-bed to tell her that the great enemy of the crown was dead, “*now piece together.*”

By which she meant that the throne should at once reconcile itself with the house of Lorraine and make use of it, as the only means of preventing evil results from the hatred of the Guises, — by holding out to them the hope of surrounding the king. But the persistent craft and dissimulation of the woman and the Italian, which she had never failed to employ, was incompatible with the debauched life of her son. Catherine de' Medici once dead, the policy of the Valois died also.

Before undertaking to write the history of the man-

But neither of the two branches — the branch Cosmo and the branch Lorenzo — reigned through their direct and legitimate lines until the close of the sixteenth century, when the grand-dukes of Tuscany began to succeed each other peacefully. Alessandro de' Medici, he to whom the title of Duke *della città di Penna* was given, was the son of the Duke d'Urbino, Catherine's father, by a Moorish slave. For this reason Lorenzino claimed a double right to kill Alessandro, — as a usurper in his house, as well as an oppressor of the city. Some historians believe that Alessandro was the son of Clement VII. The fact that led to the recognition of this bastard as chief of the republic and head of the house of the Medici was his marriage with Margaret of Austria, natural daughter of Charles V.

Francesco de' Medici, husband of Bianca Capello, accepted as his son a child of poor parents bought by the celebrated Venetian; and, strange to say, Ferdinando, on succeeding Francesco, maintained the substituted child in all his rights. That child, called Antonio de' Medici, was considered during four reigns as belonging to the family; he won the affection of everybody, rendered important services to the family, and died universally regretted.

Nearly all the first Medici had natural children, whose careers were invariably brilliant. For instance, the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, afterwards pope under the name of Clement VII., was the illegitimate son of Giuliano I. Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici was also a bastard, and came very near being pope and the head of the family.

Lorenzo II., the father of Catherine, married in 1518, for his second wife, Madeleine de la Tour de Boulogne, in Auvergne, and died April 25, 1519, a few days after his wife, who died in giving birth to Catherine. Catherine was therefore orphaned of father and mother as soon as she drew breath. Hence the strange adventures of her childhood, mixed up as they were with the bloody efforts of the Florentines, then seeking to recover their liberty from the Medici. The latter, desirous of continuing to reign in Florence, behaved with such circumspection that Lorenzo, Catherine's father, had taken the name of Duke d'Urbino.

At Lorenzo's death, the head of the house of the Medici was Pope Leo X., who sent the illegitimate son of Giuliano, Giulio de' Medici, then cardinal, to govern Florence. Leo X. was great-uncle to Catherine, and this Cardinal Giulio, afterward Clement VII., was her uncle by the left hand.

It was during the siege of Florence, undertaken by the Medici to force their return there, that the Republican party, not content with having shut Catherine, then nine years old, into a convent, after robbing her of all her property, actually proposed, on the suggestion of one named Batista Cei, to expose her between two battlements on the walls to the artillery of the Medici. Bernardo Castiglione went further in a council held to determine how matters should be ended: he was of opinion that, so far from returning her to the pope as the latter requested, she ought to be given to the soldiers for dishonor. This will show how all popular revolutions resemble each other. Catherine's subsequent policy, which upheld so firmly the royal power,

may well have been instigated in part by such scenes, of which an Italian girl of nine years of age was assuredly not ignorant.

The rise of Alessandro de' Medici, to which the bastard Pope Clement VII. powerfully contributed, was no doubt chiefly caused by the affection of Charles V. for his famous illegitimate daughter Margaret. Thus pope and emperor were prompted by the same sentiment. At this epoch Venice had the commerce of the world; Rome had its moral government; Italy still reigned supreme through the poets, the generals, the statesmen born to her. At no period of the world's history, in any land, was there ever seen so remarkable, so abundant a collection of men of genius. There were so many, in fact, that even the lesser princes were superior men. Italy was crammed with talent, enterprise, knowledge, science, poesy, wealth, and gallantry, all the while torn by intestinal warfare and overrun with conquerors struggling for possession of her finest provinces. When men are so strong, they do not fear to admit their weaknesses. Hence, no doubt, this golden age for bastards. We must, moreover, do the illegitimate children of the house of the Medici the justice to say that they were ardently devoted to the glory, power, and increase of wealth of that famous family. Thus as soon as the *Duca della città di Penna*, son of the Moorish woman, was installed as tyrant of Florence, he espoused the interest Pope Clement VII., and gave a home to the daughter of Lorenzo II., then eleven years of age.

When we study the march of events and that of men in this curious sixteenth century, we ought never to

forget that public policy had for its element a perpetual craftiness, and a dissimulation which destroyed, in all characters, the straightforward, upright bearing our imaginations demand of eminent personages. In this, above all, is Catherine's absolution. It disposes of the vulgar and foolish accusations of treachery launched against her by the writers of the Reformation. This was the great age of that statesmanship the code of which was written by Macchiavelli as well as by Spinoza, by Hobbes as well as by Montesquieu, — for the dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates contains Montesquieu's true thought, which his connection with the Encyclopedists did not permit him to develop otherwise than as he did.

These principles are to-day the secret law of all cabinets in which plans for the conquest and maintenance of great power are laid. In France we blamed Napoleon when he made use of that Italian genius for craft which was bred in his bone, — though in his case it did not always succeed. But Charles V., Catherine, Philip II., and Pope Julius would not have acted otherwise than as he did in the affair of Spain. History, in the days when Catherine was born, if judged from the point of view of honesty, would seem an impossible tale. Charles V., obliged to sustain Catholicism against the attacks of Luther, who threatened the Throne in threatening the Tiara, allowed the siege of Rome and held Pope Clement VII. in prison! This same Clement, who had no bitterer enemy than Charles V., courted him in order to make Alessandro de' Medici ruler of Florence, and obtained his favorite daughter for that bastard. No sooner was Alessandro

established than he, conjointly with Clement VII., endeavored to injure Charles V. by allying himself with François I., king of France, by means of Catherine de' Medici; and both of them promised to assist François in reconquering Italy. Lorenzino de' Medici made himself the companion of Alessandro's debaucheries for the express purpose of finding an opportunity to kill him. Filippo Strozzi, one of the great minds of that day, held this murder in such respect that he swore that his sons should each marry a daughter of the murderer; and each son religiously fulfilled his father's oath when they might all have made, under Catherine's protection, brilliant marriages; for one was the rival of Doria, the other a marshal of France. Cosmo de' Medici, successor of Alessandro, with whom he had no relationship, avenged the death of that tyrant in the cruellest manner, with a persistency lasting twelve years; during which time his hatred continued keen against the persons who had, as a matter of fact, given him the power. He was eighteen years old when called to the sovereignty; his first act was to declare the rights of Alessandro's legitimate sons null and void,—all the while avenging their father's death! Charles V. confirmed the disinheriting of his grandsons, and recognized Cosmo instead of the son of Alessandro and his daughter Margaret. Cosmo, placed on the throne by Cardinal Cibo, instantly exiled the latter; and the cardinal revenged himself by accusing Cosmo (who was the first grand-duke) of murdering Alessandro's son. Cosmo, as jealous of his power as Charles V. was of his, abdicated in favor of his son Francesco, after causing the death of his other son,

Garcia, to avenge the death of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, whom Garcia had assassinated. Cosmo the First and his son Francesco, who ought to have been devoted, body and soul, to the house of France, the only power on which they might really have relied, made themselves the lacqueys of Charles V. and Philip II., and were consequently the secret, base, and perfidious enemies of Catherine de' Medici, one of the glories of their house.

Such were the leading contradictory and illogical traits, the treachery, knavery, and black intrigues of a single house, that of the Medici. From this sketch, we may judge of the other princes of Italy and Europe. All the envoys of Cosmo I. to the court of France had, in their secret instructions, an order to poison Strozzi, Catherine's relation, when he arrived. Charles V. had already assassinated three of the ambassadors of François I.

It was early in the month of October, 1533, that the *Duca della città di Penna* started from Florence for Livorno, accompanied by the sole heiress of Lorenzo II., namely, Catherine de' Medici. The duke and the Princess of Florence, for that was the title by which the young girl, then fourteen years of age, was known, left the city surrounded by a large retinue of servants, officers, and secretaries, preceded by armed men, and followed by an escort of cavalry. The young princess knew nothing as yet of what her fate was to be, except that the pope was to have an interview at Livorno with the Duke Alessandro; but her uncle, Filippo Strozzi, very soon informed her of the future before her.

Filippo Strozzi had married Clarice de' Medici, half

sister on the father's side of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, father of Catherine ; but this marriage, which was brought about as much to convert one of the firmest supporters of the popular party to the cause of the Medici as to facilitate the recall of that family, then banished from Florence, never shook the stern champion from his course, though he was persecuted by his own party for making it. In spite of all apparent changes in his conduct (for this alliance naturally affected it somewhat) he remained faithful to the popular party, and declared himself openly against the Medici as soon as he foresaw their intention to enslave Florence. This great man even refused the offer of a principality made to him by Leo X.

At the time of which we are now writing Filippo Strozzi was a victim to the policy of the Medici, so vacillating in its means, so fixed and inflexible in its object. After sharing the misfortunes and the captivity of Clement VII. when the latter, surprised by the Colonna, took refuge in the Castle of Saint-Angelo, Strozzi was delivered up by Clement as a hostage and taken to Naples. As the pope, when he got his liberty, turned savagely on his enemies, Strozzi came very near losing his life, and was forced to pay an enormous sum to be released from a prison where he was closely confined. When he found himself at liberty he had, with an instinct of kindness natural to an honest man, the simplicity to present himself before Clement VII., who had perhaps congratulated himself on being well rid of him. The pope had such good cause to blush for his own conduct that he received Strozzi extremely ill.

Strozzi thus began, early in life, his apprenticeship

to the misfortunes of an honest man in politics, — a man whose conscience cannot lend itself to the capriciousness of events; whose actions are acceptable only to the virtuous; and who is therefore persecuted by the world, — by the people, for opposing their blind passions; by power for opposing its usurpations. The life of such great citizens is a martyrdom, in which they are sustained only by the voice of their conscience and an heroic sense of social duty, which dictates their course in all things. There were many such men in the republic of Florence, all as great as Strozzi, and as able as their adversaries the Medici, though vanquished by the superior craft and wiliness of the latter. What could be more worthy of admiration than the conduct of the chief of the Pazzi at the time of the conspiracy of his house, when, his commerce being at that time enormous, he settled all his accounts with Asia, the Levant, and Europe before beginning that great attempt; so that, if it failed, his correspondents should lose nothing.

The history of the establishment of the house of the Medici in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is a magnificent tale which still remains to be written, though men of genius have already put their hands to it. It is not the history of a republic, nor of a society, nor of any special civilization; it is the history of STATESMEN, the eternal history of Politics, — that of usurpers, that of conquerors.

As soon as Filippo Strozzi returned to Florence he re-established the preceding form of government and ousted Ippolito de' Medici, another bastard, and the very Alessandro with whom, at the later period of

which we are now writing, he was travelling to Livorno. Having effected this change of government, he became alarmed at the evident inconstancy of the people of Florence, and, fearing the vengeance of Clement VII., he went to Lyon to superintend a vast house of business he owned there, which corresponded with other banking-houses of his own in Venice, Rome, France, and Spain. Here we find a strange thing. These men who bore the weight of public affairs and of such a struggle as that with the Medici (not to speak of contentions with their own party) found time and strength to bear the burden of a vast business and all its speculations, also of banks and their complications, which the multiplicity of coinages and their falsification rendered even more difficult than it is in our day. The name "banker" comes from the *banc* (Anglice, *bench*) upon which the banker sat, and on which he rang the gold and silver pieces to try their quality. After a time Filippo found in the death of his wife, whom he adored, a pretext for renewing his relations with the Republican party, whose secret police becomes the more terrible in all republics, because every one makes himself a spy in the name of a liberty which justifies everything.

Filippo returned to Florence at the very moment when that city was compelled to accept the yoke of Alessandro; but he had previously gone to Rome and seen Pope Clement VII., whose affairs were now so prosperous that his disposition toward Strozzi was much changed. In the hour of triumph the Medici were so much in need of a man like Filippo — were it only to smooth the return of Alessandro — that Clement urged him to take a seat at the Council of the bastard

who was about to oppress the city ; and Strozzi consented to accept the diploma of a senator.

But, for the last two years and more, he had seen, like Seneca and Burrhus, the beginnings of tyranny in his Nero. He felt himself, at the moment of which we write, an object of so much distrust on the part of the people and so suspected by the Medici whom he was constantly resisting, that he was confident of some approaching catastrophe. Consequently, as soon as he heard from Alessandro of the negotiation for Catherine's marriage with the son of François I., the final arrangements for which were to be made at Livorno, where the negotiators had appointed to meet, he formed the plan of going to France, and attaching himself to the fortunes of his niece, who needed a guardian.

Alessandro, delighted to rid himself of a man so unaccommodating in the affairs of Florence, furthered a plan which relieved him of one murder at least, and advised Strozzi to put himself at the head of Catherine's household. In order to dazzle the eyes of France the Medici had selected a brilliant suite for her whom they styled, very unwarrantably, the Princess of Florence, and who also went by the name of the little Duchess d'Urbino. The cortège, at the head of which rode Alessandro, Catherine, and Strozzi, was composed of more than a thousand persons, not including the escort and servants. When the last of it issued from the gates of Florence the head had passed that first village beyond the city where they now braid the Tuscan straw hats. It was beginning to be rumored among the people that Catherine was to marry a son of François I. ; but the rumor did not obtain much belief until the

Tuscans beheld with their own eyes this triumphal procession from Florence to Livorno.

Catherine herself, judging by all the preparations she beheld, began to suspect that her marriage was in question, and her uncle then revealed to her the fact that the first ambitious project of his house had aborted, and that the hand of the dauphin had been refused to her. Alessandro still hoped that the Duke of Albany would succeed in changing this decision of the king of France who, willing as he was to buy the support of the Medici in Italy, would only grant them his second son, the Duc d'Orleans. This petty blunder lost Italy to France, and did not prevent Catherine from becoming queen.

The Duke of Albany, son of Alexander Stuart, brother of James III. king of Scotland, had married Anne de la Tour de Boulogne, sister of Madeleine de la Tour de Bologne, Catherine's mother; he was therefore her maternal uncle. It was through her mother that Catherine was so rich and allied to so many great families; for, strangely enough, her rival, Diane de Poitiers, was also her cousin. Jean de Poitiers, father of Diane, was son of Jeanne de Boulogne, aunt of the Duchess d'Urbino. Catherine was also a cousin of Mary Stuart, her daughter-in-law.

Catherine now learned that her dowry in money was a hundred thousand ducats. A ducat was a gold piece of the size of an old French louis, though less thick. (The old louis was worth twenty-four francs — the present one is worth twenty.) The Comtés of Auvergne and Lauragnais were also made a part of the dowry, and Pope Clement added one hundred thousand

ducats in jewels, precious stones, and other wedding gifts; to which Alessandro likewise contributed his share.

On arriving at Livorno, Catherine, still so young, must have been flattered by the extreme magnificence displayed by Pope Clement ("her uncle in Notre-Dame," then head of the house of the Medici), in order to outdo the court of France. He had already arrived at Livorno in one of his galleys, which was lined with crimson satin fringed with gold, and covered with a tent-like awning in cloth of gold. This galley, the decoration of which cost twenty thousand ducats, contained several apartments destined for the bride of Henri of France, all of which were furnished with the richest treasures of art the Medici could collect. The rowers, magnificently apparelled, and the crew were under the command of a prior of the order of the Knights of Rhodes. The household of the pope were in three other galleys. The galleys of the Duke of Albany, anchored near those of Clement VII., added to the size and dignity of the flotilla.

Duke Alessandro presented the officers of Catherine's household to the pope, with whom he had a secret conference, in which, it would appear, he presented to his Holiness Count Sebastiano Montecuculi, who had just left, somewhat abruptly, the service of Charles V. and that of his two generals, Antonio di Leyva and Ferdinando di Gonzago. Was there between the two bastards, Giulio and Alessandro, a premeditated intention of making the Duc d'Orléans dauphin? What reward was promised to Sebastiano Montecuculi, who, before entering the service of Charles V. had studied medicine?

History is silent on that point. We shall see presently what clouds hang round that fact. The obscurity is so great that, quite recently, grave and conscientious historians have admitted Montecuculi's innocence.

Catherine then heard officially from the pope's own lips of the alliance reserved for her. The Duke of Albany had been able to do no more than hold the king of France, and that with difficulty, to his promise of giving Catherine the hand of his second son, the Duc d'Orléans. The pope's impatience was so great, and he was so afraid that his plans would be thwarted either by some intrigue of the emperor, or by the refusal of France, or by the grandees of the kingdom looking with evil eye upon the marriage, that he gave orders to embark at once, and sailed for Marseille, where he arrived toward the end of October, 1533.

Notwithstanding its wealth, the house of the Medici was eclipsed on this occasion by the court of France. To show the lengths to which the Medici pushed their magnificence, it is enough to say that the "dozen" put into the bride's purse by the pope were twelve gold medals of priceless historical value, which were then unique. But François I., who loved the display of festivals, distinguished himself on this occasion. The wedding festivities of Henri de Valois and Catherine de' Medici lasted thirty-four days.

It is useless to repeat the details, which have been given in all the histories of Provence and Marseille, as to this celebrated interview between the Pope and the king of France, which was opened by a jest of the Duke of Albany as to the duty of keeping fasts, — a jest mentioned by Brantôme and much enjoyed by the court, which shows the tone of the manners of that day.

Many conjectures have been made as to Catherine's barrenness, which lasted ten years. Strange calumnies still rest upon this queen, all of whose actions were fated to be misjudged. It is sufficient to say that the cause was solely in Henri II. After the difficulty was removed, Catherine had ten children. The delay was, in one respect, fortunate for France. If Henri II. had had children by Diane de Poitiers the politics of the kingdom would have been dangerously complicated. When the difficulty was removed the Duchesse de Valentinois had reached the period of a woman's second youth. This matter alone will show that the true life of Catherine de' Medici is still to be written, and also — as Napoleon said with profound wisdom — that the history of France should be either in one volume only, or one thousand.

Here is a contemporaneous and succinct account of the meeting of Clement VII. and the king of France :

“His Holiness the pope, having been conducted to the palace, which was, as I have said, prepared beyond the port, every one retired to their own quarters till the morrow, when his Holiness was to make his entry; the which was made with great sumptuousness and magnificence, he being seated in a chair carried on the shoulders of two men and wearing his pontifical robes, but not the tiara. Pacing before him was a white hackney, bearing the sacrament of the altar, — the said hackney being led by reins of white silk held by two footmen finely equipped. Next came all the cardinals in their robes, on pontifical mules, and Madame la Duchesse d' Urbino in great magnificence, accompanied by a vast number of ladies and gentlemen, both French and Italian.

“The Holy Father having arrived in the midst of this company at the place appointed for his lodging, every one

retired; and all this, being well-ordered, took place without disorder or tumult. While the pope was thus making his entry, the king crossed the water in a frigate and went to the lodging the pope had just quitted, in order to go the next day and make obeisance to the Holy Father as a Most Christian king.

“The next day the king being prepared set forth for the palace where was the pope, accompanied by the princes of the blood, such as Monseigneur le Duc de Vendomois (father of the Vidame de Chartres), the Comte de Saint-Pol, Messieurs de Montpensier and la Roche-sur-Yon, the Duc de Nemours (brother of the Duc de Savoie) who died in this said place, the Duke of Albany, and many others, whether counts, barons, or seigneurs; nearest to the king was the Seigneur de Montmorency, his Grand-master.

“The king, being arrived at the palace, was received by the pope and all the college of cardinals, assembled in consistory, most civilly. This done, each retired to the place ordained for him, the king taking with him several cardinals to feast them, — among them Cardinal de’ Medici, nephew of the pope, a very splendid man with a fine retinue.

“On the morrow those persons chosen by his Holiness and by the king began to assemble to discuss the matters for which the meeting was made. First, the matter of the Faith was treated of, and a bull was put forth repressing heresy and preventing that things come to greater combustion than they now are.

“After this, was concluded the marriage of the Duc d’Orléans, second son of the king, with Catherine de’ Medici, Duchesse d’Urbino, niece of his Holiness, under the conditions such, or like to those, as were proposed formerly by the Duke of Albany. The said espousals were celebrated with great magnificence, and our Holy Father himself wedded the pair. The marriage thus consummated, the Holy Father held a consistory at which he created four cardinals and devoted them to the king, — to wit: Cardinal

Le Veneur, formerly bishop of Lisieux and grand almoner; the Cardinal de Boulogne of the family of la Chambre, brother on the mother's side of the Duke of Albany; the Cardinal de Châtillon of the house of Coligny, nephew of the Sire de Montmorency, and the Cardinal de Givry."

When Strozzi delivered the dowry in presence of the court he noticed some surprise on the part of the French seigneurs; they even said aloud that it was little enough for such a *mésalliance* (what would they have said in these days?). Cardinal Ippolito replied, saying:—

"You must be ill-informed as to the secrets of your king. His Holiness has bound himself to give to France three pearls of inestimable value, namely: Genoa, Milan, and Naples."

The pope left Sebastiano Montecuculi to present himself to the court of France, to which the count offered his services, complaining of his treatment by Antonio di Leyva and Ferdinando di Gonzago, for which reason his services were accepted. Montecuculi was not made a part of Catherine's household, which was wholly composed of French men and women, for, by a law of the monarchy, the execution of which the pope saw with great satisfaction, Catherine was naturalized by letters-patent as a Frenchwoman before the marriage. Montecuculi was appointed in the first instance to the household of the queen, the sister of Charles V. After a while he passed into the service of the dauphin as cup-bearer.

The new Duchesse d'Orléans soon found herself a nullity at the court of François I. Her young husband was in love with Diane de Poitiers, who certainly, in the matter of birth, could rival Catherine, and was far more

of a great lady than the little Florentine. The daughter of the Medici was also outdone by Queen Eléonore, sister of Charles V., and by Madame d'Étampes, whose marriage with the head of the house of Brosse made her one of the most powerful and best titled women in France. Catherine's aunt the Duchess of Albany, the Queen of Navarre, the Duchesse de Guise, the Duchesse de Vendôme, Madame la Connétable de Montmorency, and other women of like importance, eclipsed by birth and by their rights, as well as by their power at the most sumptuous court of France (not excepting that of Louis XIV.), the daughter of the Florentine grocers, who was richer and more illustrious through the house of the Tour de Boulogne than by her own family of Medici.

The position of his niece was so bad and difficult that the republican Filippo Strozzi, wholly incapable of guiding her in the midst of such conflicting interests, left her after the first year, being recalled to Italy by the death of Clement VII. Catherine's conduct, when we remember that she was scarcely fifteen years old, was a model of prudence. She attached herself closely to the king, her father-in-law; she left him as little as she could, following him on horseback both in hunting and in war. Her idolatry for François I. saved the house of the Medici from all suspicion when the dauphin was poisoned. Catherine was then, and so was her husband, at the headquarters of the king in Provence; for Charles V. had speedily invaded France, and the late scene of the marriage festivities had become the theatre of a cruel war.

At the moment when Charles V. was put to flight,

leaving the bones of his army in Provence, the dauphin was returning to Lyon by the Rhone. He stopped to sleep at Tournon, and, by way of pastime, practised some violent physical exercises, — which were nearly all the education his brother and he, in consequence of their detention as hostages, had ever received. The prince had the imprudence — it being the month of August, and the weather very hot — to ask for a glass of water, which Montecuculi, as his cup-bearer, gave to him, with ice in it. The dauphin died almost immediately. François I. adored his son. The dauphin was, according to all accounts, a charming young man. His father, in despair, gave the utmost publicity to the proceedings against Montecuculi, which he placed in the hands of the most able magistrates of that day. The count, after heroically enduring the first tortures without confessing anything, finally made admissions by which he implicated Charles V. and his two generals, Antonio di Leyva and Ferdinando di Gonzago. No affair was ever more solemnly debated. Here is what the king did, in the words of an ocular witness : —

“The king called an assembly at Lyon of all the princes of his blood, all the knights of his order, and other great personages of the kingdom; also the legate and papal nuncio, the cardinals who were at his court, together with the ambassadors of England, Scotland, Portugal, Venice, Ferrara, and others; also all the princes and noble strangers, both Italian and German, who were then residing at his court in great numbers. These all being assembled, he caused to be read to them, in presence of each other, from beginning to end, the trial of the unhappy man who poisoned Monseigneur the late dauphin, — with all the inter

rogatories, confessions, confrontings, and other ceremonies usual in criminal trials; he, the king, not being willing that the sentence should be executed until all present had given their opinion on this heinous and miserable case."

The fidelity, devotion, and cautious skill of the Comte de Montecuculi may seem extraordinary in our time, when all the world, even ministers of State, tell everything about the least little event with which they have to do; but in those days princes could find devoted servants, or knew how to choose them. Monarchical Moreys existed because in those days there was *faith*. Never ask devotion of *self-interest*, because such interest may change; but expect all from sentiments, religious faith, monarchical faith, patriotic faith. Those three beliefs produced such men as the Berthercaus of Geneva, the Sydneys and Straffords of England, the murderers of Thomas à Becket, the Jacques Cœurs, the Jeanne d'Arcs, the Richelieus, Dantons, Bonchamps, Talmonts, and also the Clements, Chabots, and others.

The dauphin was poisoned in the same manner, and possibly by the same drug which afterwards served MADAME under Louis XIV. Pope Clement VII. had been dead two years; Duke Alessandro, plunged in debauchery, seemed to have no interest in the elevation of the Duc d'Orléans; Catherine, then seventeen, and full of admiration for her father-in-law, was with him at the time; Charles V. alone appeared to have an interest in this death, for François I. was negotiating for his son an alliance which would assuredly have aggrandized France. The count's confession was therefore very skilfully based on the passions and poli-

tics of the moment; Charles V. was then flying from France, leaving his armies buried in Provence with his happiness, his reputation, and his hopes of dominion. It is to be remarked that if torture had forced admissions from an innocent man, François I. gave Montecuculi full liberty to speak in presence of an imposing assembly, and before persons in whose eyes innocence had some chance to triumph. The king, who wanted the truth, sought it in good faith.

In spite of her now brilliant future, Catherine's situation at court was not changed by the death of the dauphin. Her barrenness gave reason to fear a divorce in case her husband should ascend the throne. The dauphin was under the spell of Diane de Poitiers, who assumed to rival Madame d'Étampes, the king's mistress. Catherine redoubled in care and cajolery of her father-in-law, being well aware that her sole support was in him. The first ten years of Catherine's married life were years of ever-renewed grief, caused by the failure, one by one, of her hopes of pregnancy, and the vexations of her rivalry with Diane. Imagine what must have been the life of a young princess, watched by a jealous mistress who was supported by a powerful party, — the Catholic party, — and by the two powerful alliances Diane had made in marrying one daughter to Robert de la Mark, Duc de Bouillon, Prince of Sedan, and the other to Claude de Lorraine, Duc d'Aumale.

Catherine, helpless between the party of Madame d'Étampes and the party of the Sénéchale (such was Diane's title during the reign of François I.), which divided the court and politics into factions for these mor-

tal enemies, endeavored to make herself the friend of both Diane de Poitiers and Madame d'Étampes. She, who was destined to become so great a queen, played the part of a servant. Thus she served her apprenticeship in that double-faced policy which was ever the secret motor of her life. Later, the *queen* was to stand between Catholics and Calvinists, just as the *woman* had stood for ten years between Madame d'Étampes and Madame de Poitiers. She studied the contradictions of French politics; she saw François I. sustaining Calvin and the Lutherans in order to embarrass Charles V., and then, after secretly and patiently protecting the Reformation in Germany, and tolerating the residence of Calvin at the court of Navarre, he suddenly turned against it with excessive rigor. Catherine beheld on the one hand the court, and the women of the court, playing with the fire of heresy, and on the other, Diane at the head of the Catholic party with the Guises, solely because the Duchesse d'Étampes supported Calvin and the Protestants.

Such was the political education of this queen, who saw in the cabinet of the king of France the same errors committed as in the house of the Medici. The dauphin opposed his father in everything; he was a bad son. He forgot the cruel but most vital maxim of royalty, namely, that thrones need solidarity; and that a son who creates opposition during the lifetime of his father must follow that father's policy when he mounts the throne. Spinoza, who was as great a statesman as he was a philosopher, said — in the case of one king succeeding another by insurrection or crime, —

“If the new king desires to secure the safety of his throne and of his own life he must show such ardor in avenging the death of his predecessor that no one shall feel a desire to commit the same crime. But to avenge it *worthily* it is not enough to shed the blood of his subjects, he must approve the axioms of the king he replaces, and take the same course in governing.”

It was the application of this maxim which gave Florence to the Medici. Cosmo I. caused to be assassinated at Venice, after eleven years' sway, the Florentine Brutus, and, as we have already said, persecuted the Strozzi. It was forgetfulness of this maxim which ruined Louis XVI. That king was false to every principle of royal government when he re-established the parliaments suppressed by his grandfather. Louis XV. saw the matter clearly. The parliaments, and notably that of Paris, counted for fully half in the troubles which necessitated the convocation of the States-general. The fault of Louis XV. was, that in breaking down that barrier which separated the throne from the people he did not erect a stronger; in other words, that he did not substitute for parliament a strong constitution of the provinces. There lay the remedy for the evils of the monarchy; thence should have come the voting on taxes, the regulation of them, and a slow approval of reforms that were necessary to the system of monarchy.

The first act of Henry II. was to give his confidence to the Connétable de Montmorency, whom his father had enjoined him to leave in disgrace. The Connétable de Montmorency was, with Diane de Poitiers, to whom he was closely bound, the master of the State. Catherine was therefore less happy and less powerful after

she became queen of France than while she was dauphiness. From 1543 she had a child every year for ten years, and was occupied with maternal cares during the period covered by the last three years of the reign of François I. and nearly the whole of the reign of Henri II. We may see in this recurring fecundity the influence of a rival, who was able thus to rid herself of the legitimate wife, — a barbarity of feminine policy which must have been one of Catherine's grievances against Diane.

Thus set aside from public life, this superior woman passed her time in observing the self-interests of the court people and of the various parties which were formed about her. All the Italians who had followed her were objects of violent suspicion. After the execution of Montecuculi the Connétable de Montmorency, Diane, and many of the keenest politicians of the court were filled with suspicion of the Medici; though François I. always repelled it. Consequently, the Gondi, Strozzi, Ruggieri, Sardini, etc., — in short, all those who were called distinctively "the Italians," — were compelled to employ great resources of mind, shrewd policy, and courage, to maintain themselves at court against the weight of disfavor which pressed upon them.

During her husband's reign Catherine's amiability to Diane de Poitiers went to such lengths that intelligent persons must regard it as proof of that profound dissimulation which men, events, and the conduct of Henri II. compelled Catherine de' Medici to employ. But they go too far when they declare that she never claimed her rights as wife and queen. In the first place, the sense of dignity which Catherine possessed

in the highest degree forbade her claiming what historians call her rights as a wife. The ten children of the marriage explain Henri's conduct; and his wife's maternal occupations left him free to pass his time with Diane de Poitiers. But the king was never lacking in anything that was due to himself; and he gave Catherine an "entry" into Paris, to be crowned as queen, which was worthy of all such pageants that had ever taken place. The archives of the Parliament, and those of the Cour des Comptes, show that those two great bodies went to meet her outside of Paris as far as Saint Lazare. Here is an extract from du Tillet's account of it: —

"A platform had been erected at Saint-Lazare, on which was a throne (du Tillet calls it a *chair de parement*). Catherine took her seat upon it, wearing a surcoat, or species of ermine short-cloak covered with precious stones, a bodice beneath it with the royal mantle, and on her head a crown enriched with pearls and diamonds, and held in place by the Maréchale de la Mark, her lady of honor. Around her stood the princes of the blood, and other princes and seigneurs, richly apparelled, also the chancellor of France in a robe of gold damask on a background of crimson-red. Before the queen, and on the same platform, were seated, in two rows, twelve duchesses or countesses, wearing ermine surcoats, bodices, robes, and circlets,—that is to say, the coronets of duchesses and countesses. These were the Duchesses d'Estouteville, Montpensier (elder and younger); the Princesses de la Roche-sur-Yon; the Duchesses de Guise, de Nivernois, d'Aumale, de Valentinois (Diane de Poitiers), Mademoiselle la bâtarde légitimée de France (the title of the king's daughter, Diane, who was Duchesse de Castro-Farnese and afterwards Duchesse de Montmorency-Damville), Madame la Connétable, and Mademoiselle de Nemours; without men:

tioning other demoiselles who were not seated. The four presidents of the courts of justice, wearing their caps, several other members of the court, and the clerk du Tillet, mounted the platform, made reverent bows, and the chief judge, Lizet, kneeling down, harangued the queen. The chancellor then knelt down and answered. The queen made her entry at half-past three o'clock in an open litter, having Madame Marguerite de France sitting opposite to her, and on either side of the litter the Cardinals of Amboise, Châtillon. Boulogne, and de Lenoncourt in their episcopal robes. She left her litter at the church of Notre-Dame, where she was received by the clergy. After offering her prayer she was conducted by the rue de la Calandre to the palace, where . . . the royal supper was served in the great hall. She there appeared, seated at the middle of the marble table, beneath a velvet dais strewn with golden fleur-de-lis."

We may here put an end to one of those popular beliefs which are repeated by many writers from Sauval down. It has been said that Henri II. pushed his neglect of the proprieties so far as to put the initials of his mistress on the buildings which Catherine advised him to continue or to begin with so much magnificence. But the double monogram which can be seen at the Louvre offers a daily denial to those who are so little clear-sighted as to believe in silly nonsense which gratuitously insults our kings and queens. The H of Henri and the two C's of Catherine which back it, appear to represent the two D's of Diane. The coincidence may have pleased Henri II., but it is none the less true that the royal monogram contained officially the initial of the king and that of the queen. This is so true that the monogram can still be seen on the column of the Halle au Blé, which was built by

Catherine alone. It can also be seen in the crypt of Saint-Denis, on the tomb which Catherine erected for herself in her lifetime beside that of Henri II., where her figure is modelled from nature by the sculptor to whom she sat for it.

On a solemn occasion, when he was starting, March 25, 1552, for his expedition into Germany, Henri II. declared Catherine regent during his absence, and also in case of his death. Catherine's most cruel enemy, the author of "*Marvellous Discourses on Catherine the Second's Behavior*" admits that she carried on the government with universal approval and that the king was satisfied with her administration. Henri received both money and men at the time he wanted them; and finally, after the fatal day of Saint-Quentin, Catherine obtained considerable sums of money from the people of Paris, which she sent to Compiègne, where the king then was.

In politics, Catherine made immense efforts to obtain a little influence. She was clever enough to bring the Connétable de Montmorency, all-powerful under Henri II., to her interests. We all know the terrible answer that the king made, on being harassed by Montmorency in her favor. This answer was the result of an attempt by Catherine to give the king good advice, in the few moments she was ever alone with him, when she explained the Florentine policy of pitting the *grande*s of the kingdom one against another and establishing the royal authority on their ruins. But Henri II., who saw things only through the eyes of Diane and the Connétable, was a truly feudal king and the friend of all the great families of his kingdom.

After the futile attempt of the Connétable in her favor, which must have been made in the year 1556, Catherine began to cajole the Guises for the purpose of detaching them from Diane and opposing them to the Connétable. Unfortunately, Diane and Montmorency were as vehement against the Protestants as the Guises. There was therefore not the same animosity in their struggle as there might have been had the religious question entered it. Moreover, Diane boldly entered the lists against the queen's project by coquetting with the Guises and giving her daughter to the Duc d'Aumale. She even went so far that certain authors declared she gave more than mere good-will to the gallant Cardinal de Lorraine; and the lampooners of the time made the following quatrain on Henri II :

“Sire, if you 're weak and let your will relax
Till Diane and Lorraine do govern you,
Pound, knead and mould, re-melt and model you,
Sire, you are nothing — nothing else than wax.”

It is impossible to regard as sincere the signs of grief and the ostentation of mourning which Catherine showed on the death of Henri II. The fact that the king was attached by an unalterable passion to Diane de Poitiers naturally made Catherine play the part of a neglected wife who adores her husband; but, like all women who act by their head, she persisted in this dissimulation and never ceased to speak tenderly of Henri II. In like manner Diane, as we know, wore mourning all her life for her husband the Senéchal de Brézé. Her colors were black and white, and the king was wearing them at the tournament when he was

killed. Catherine, no doubt in imitation of her rival, wore mourning for Henri II. for the rest of her life. She showed a consummate perfidy toward Diane de Poitiers, to which historians have not given due attention. At the king's death the Duchesse de Valentinois was completely disgraced and shamefully abandoned by the Connétable, a man who was always below his reputation. Diane offered her estate and château of Chenonceaux to the queen. Catherine then said, in presence of witnesses:—

“I can never forget that she made the happiness of my dear Henri. I am ashamed to accept her gift; I wish to give her a domain in place of it, and I shall offer her that of Chaumont-sur-Loire.”

Accordingly, the deed of exchange was signed at Blois in 1559. Diane, whose sons-in-law were the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Bouillon (then a sovereign prince), kept her wealth, and died in 1566 aged sixty-six. She was therefore nineteen years older than Henri II. These dates, taken from her epitaph which was copied from her tomb by the historian who concerned himself so much about her at the close of the last century, clear up quite a number of historical difficulties. Some historians have declared she was forty, others that she was sixteen at the time of her father's condemnation in 1523; in point of fact she was then twenty-four. After reading everything for and against her conduct towards François I. we are unable to affirm or to deny anything. This is one of the passages of history that will ever remain obscure. We may see by what happens in our own day how history is falsified at the very moment when events happen.

Catherine, who had founded great hopes on the age of her rival, tried more than once to overthrow her. It was a dumb, underhand, terrible struggle. The day came when Catherine believed herself for a moment on the verge of success. In 1554, Diane, who was ill, begged the king to go to Saint-Germain and leave her for a short time until she recovered. This stately coquette did not choose to be seen in the midst of medical appliances and without the splendors of apparel. Catherine arranged, as a welcome to her husband, a magnificent ballet, in which six beautiful young girls were to recite a poem in his honor. She chose for this function Miss Fleming, a relation of her uncle the Duke of Albany, the handsomest young woman, some say, that was ever seen, white and very fair; also one of her own relations, Clarice Strozzi, a magnificent Italian with superb black hair, and hands that were of rare beauty; Miss Lewiston, maid of honor to Mary Stuart; Mary Stuart herself; Madame Elizabeth of France (who was afterwards that unfortunate Queen of Spain); and Madame Claude. Elizabeth and Claude were eight and nine years old, Mary Stuart twelve; evidently the queen intended to bring forward Miss Fleming and Clarice Strozzi and present them without rivals to the king. The king fell in love with Miss Fleming, by whom he had a natural son, Henri de Valois, Comte d'Angoulême, grand-prior of France. But the power and influence of Diane were not shaken. Like Madame de Pompadour with Louis XV., the Duchesse de Valentinois forgave all. But what sort of love did this attempt show in Catherine? Was it love to her husband or love of power? Women may decide.

A great deal is said in these days of the license of the press ; but it is difficult to imagine the lengths to which it went when printing was first invented. We know that Aretino, the Voltaire of his time, made kings and emperors tremble, more especially Charles V. ; but the world does not know so well the audacity and license of pamphlets. The château de Chenonceaux, which we have just mentioned, was given to Diane, or rather not given, she was implored to accept it to make her forget one of the most horrible publications ever levelled against a woman, and which shows the violence of the warfare between herself and Madame d'Étampes. In 1537, when she was thirty-eight years of age, a rhymester of Champagne named Jean Voûté, published a collection of Latin verses in which were three epigrams upon her. It is to be supposed that the poet was sure of protection in high places, for the pamphlet has a preface in praise of itself, signed by Salmon Macrin, first valet-de-chambre to the king. Only one passage is quotable from these epigrams, which are entitled : IN PICTAVIAM, ANAM AULIGAM.

“ A painted trap catches no game,” says the poet, after telling Diane that she painted her face and bought her teeth and her hair. “ You may buy all that superficially makes a woman, but you can't buy that your lover wants ; for he wants life, and you are dead.”

This collection, printed by Simon de Colines, is dedicated to a bishop ! — to François Bohier, the brother of the man who, to save his credit at court and redeem his offence, offered to Diane, on the accession of Henry II., the château de Chenonceaux, built by his father, Thomas Bohier, a councillor of state under four kings : Louis XI.

Charles VIII., Louis XII., and François I. What were the pamphlets published against Madame de Pompadour and against Marie-Antoinette compared to these verses, which might have been written by Martial? Voûté must have made a bad end. The estate and château cost Diane nothing more than the forgiveness enjoined by the gospel. After all, the penalties inflicted on the press, though not decreed by juries, were somewhat more severe than those of to-day.

The queens of France, on becoming widows, were required to remain in the king's chamber forty days without other light than that of wax tapers; they did not leave the room until after the burial of the king. This inviolable custom was a great annoyance to Catherine, who feared cabals; and, by chance, she found a means to evade it, thus: Cardinal de Lorraine, leaving, very early in the morning, the house of the *belle Romaine*, a celebrated courtesan of the period, who lived in the rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, was set upon and maltreated by a party of libertines. "On which his holiness, being much astonished" (says Henri Éstienne), "gave out that the heretics were preparing ambushes against him." The court at once removed from Paris to Saint-Germain, and the queen-mother, declaring that she would not abandon the king her son, went with him.

The accession of François II., the period at which Catherine confidently believed she could get possession of the regal power, was a moment of cruel disappointment, after the twenty-six years of misery she had lived through at the court of France. The Guises laid hands on power with incredible audacity. The Duc de Guise was placed in command of the army; the Connétable

was dismissed ; the cardinal took charge of the treasury and the clergy.

Catherine now began her political career by a drama which, though it did not have the dreadful fame of those of later years, was, nevertheless, most horrible ; and it must, undoubtedly, have accustomed her to the terrible after emotions of her life. While appearing to be in harmony with the Guises, she endeavored to pave the way for her ultimate triumph by seeking a support in the house of Bourbon, and the means she took were as follows : Whether it was that (before the death of Henri II.), and after fruitlessly attempting violent measures, she wished to awaken jealousy in order to bring the king back to her ; or whether as she approached middle-age it seemed to her cruel that she had never known love, certain it is that she showed a strong interest in a seigneur of the royal blood, François de Vendôme, son of Louis de Vendôme (the house from which that of the Bourbons sprang), and Vidame de Chartres, the name under which he is known in history. The secret hatred which Catherine bore to Diane was revealed in many ways, to which historians, preoccupied by political interests, have paid no attention. Catherine's attachment to the vidame proceeded from the fact that the young man had offered an insult to the favorite. Diane's greatest ambition was for the honor of an alliance with the royal family of France. The hand of her second daughter (afterwards Duchesse d'Aumale) was offered on her behalf to the Vidame de Chartres, who was kept poor by the far-sighted policy of François I. In fact, when the Vidame de Chartres and the Prince de Condé first came to court, François I. gave them — what ? The office of

chamberlain, with a paltry salary of twelve hundred crowns a year, the same that he gave to the simplest gentlemen. Though Diane de Poitiers offered an immense dowry, a fine office under the crown, and the favor of the king, the vidame refused. After which, this Bourbon, already factious, married Jeanne, daughter of the Baron d'Estissac, by whom he had no children. This act of pride naturally commended him to Catherine, who greeted him after that with marked favor and made a devoted friend of him.

Historians have compared the last Duc de Montmorency, beheaded at Toulouse, to the Vidame de Chartres, in the art of pleasing, in attainments, accomplishments, and talent. Henri II. showed no jealousy; he seemed not even to suppose that a queen of France could fail in her duty, or a Medici forget the honor done to her by a Valois. But during this time when the queen was, it is said, coquetting with the Vidame de Chartres, the king, after the birth of her last child, had virtually abandoned her. This attempt at making him jealous was to no purpose, for Henri died wearing the colors of Diane de Poitiers.

At the time of the king's death Catherine was, therefore, on terms of gallantry with the vidame, — a situation which was quite in conformity with the manners and morals of a time when love was both so chivalrous and so licentious that the noblest actions were as natural as the most blamable; although historians, as usual, have committed the mistake in this case of taking the exception for the rule.

The four sons of Henri II. of course rendered null the position of the Bourbons, who were all extremely

poor and were now crushed down by the contempt which the Connétable de Montmorency's treachery brought upon them, in spite of the fact that the latter had thought best to fly the kingdom.

The Vidame de Chartres — who was to the first Prince de Condé what Richelieu was to Mazarin, his father in policy, his model, and, above all, his master in gallantry — concealed the excessive ambition of his house beneath an external appearance of light-hearted gayety. Unable during the reign of Henri II. to make head against the Guises, the Montmorencys, the Scottish princes, the cardinals, and the Bouillons, he distinguished himself by his graceful bearing, his manners, his wit, which won him the favor of many charming women and the heart of some for whom he cared nothing. He was one of those privileged beings whose seductions are irresistible, and who owe to love the power of maintaining themselves according to their rank. The Bourbons would not have resented, as did Jarnac, the slander of la Châtaigneraie; they were willing enough to accept the lands and castles of their mistresses, — witness the Prince de Condé, who accepted the estate of Saint-Valéry from Madame la Maréchale de Saint-André.

During the first twenty days of mourning after the death of Henri II. the situation of the vidame suddenly changed. As the object of the queen-mother's regard, and permitted to pay his court to her as court is paid to a queen, very secretly, he seemed destined to play an important rôle, and Catherine did, in fact, resolve to use him. The vidame received letters from her for the Prince de Condé, in which she pointed out to the latter

the necessity of an alliance against the Guises. Informed of this intrigue, the Guises entered the queen's chamber for the purpose of compelling her to issue an order consigning the vidame to the Bastille, and Catherine, to save herself, was under the hard necessity of obeying them. After a captivity of some months, the vidame died on the very day he left prison, which was shortly before the conspiracy of Amboise. Such was the conclusion of the first and only amour of Catherine de' Medici. Protestant historians have said that the queen caused the vidame to be poisoned, to lay the secret of her gallantries in a tomb!

We have now shown what was the apprenticeship of this woman for the exercise of her royal power.

PART FIRST.

THE CALVINIST MARTYR.

I.

A HOUSE WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS AT THE CORNER OF
A STREET WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS IN A PARIS WHICH
NO LONGER EXISTS.

FEW persons in the present day know how plain and unpretentious were the dwellings of the burghers of Paris in the sixteenth century, and how simple their lives. Perhaps this simplicity of habits and of thought was the cause of the grandeur of that old bourgeoisie which was certainly grand, free, and noble, — more so, perhaps, than the bourgeoisie of the present day. Its history is still to be written ; it requires and it awaits a man of genius. This reflection will doubtless rise to the lips of every one after reading the almost unknown incident which forms the basis of this Study and is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of that bourgeoisie. It will not be the first time in history that conclusion has preceded facts.

In 1560, the houses of the rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie skirted the left bank of the Seine, between the pont Notre-Dame and the pont au Change. A public foot-path and the houses then occupied the space covered by

the present roadway. Each house, standing almost in the river, allowed its dwellers to get down to the water by stone or wooden stairways, closed and protected by strong iron railings or wooden gates, clamped with iron. The houses, like those in Venice, had an entrance on *terra firma* and a water entrance. At the moment when the present sketch is published, only one of these houses remains to recall the old Paris of which we speak, and that is soon to disappear; it stands at the corner of the Petit-Pont, directly opposite to the guard-house of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Formerly each dwelling presented on the river-side the fantastic appearance given either by the trade of its occupant and his habits, or by the originality of the exterior constructions invented by the proprietors to use or abuse the Seine. The bridges being encumbered with more mills than the necessities of navigation could allow, the Seine formed as many enclosed basins as there were bridges. Some of these basins in the heart of old Paris would have offered precious scenes and tones of color to painters. What a forest of cross-beams supported the mills with their huge sails and their wheels! What strange effects were produced by the piles or props driven into the water to project the upper floors of the houses above the stream! Unfortunately, the art of genre painting did not exist in those days, and that of engraving was in its infancy. We have therefore lost that curious spectacle, still offered, though in miniature, by certain provincial towns, where the rivers are overhung with wooden houses, and where, as at Vendôme, the basins, full of water grasses, are enclosed by immense iron railings, to isolate each pro-

prietor's share of the stream, which extends from bank to bank.

The name of this street, which has now disappeared from the map, sufficiently indicates the trade that was carried on in it. In those days the merchants of each class of commerce, instead of dispersing themselves about the city, kept together in the same neighborhood and protected themselves mutually. Associated in corporations which limited their number, they were still further united into guilds by the Church. In this way prices were maintained. Also, the masters were not at the mercy of their workmen, and did not obey their whims as they do to-day; on the contrary, they made them their children, their apprentices, took care of them, and taught them the intricacies of the trade. In order to become a master, a workman had to produce a masterpiece, which was always dedicated to the saint of his guild. Will any one dare to say that the absence of competition destroyed the desire for perfection, or lessened the beauty of products? What say you, you whose admiration for the masterpieces of past ages has created the modern trade of the sellers of bric-à-brac?

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the trade of the furrier was one of the most flourishing industries. The difficulty of obtaining furs, which, being all brought from the north, required long and perilous journeys, gave a very high price and value to those products. Then, as now, high prices led to consumption; for vanity likes to override obstacles. In France, as in other kingdoms, not only did royal ordinances restrict the use of furs to the nobility (proved by the part

which ermine plays in the old blazons), but also certain rare furs, such as *vair* (which was undoubtedly Siberian sable), could not be worn by any but kings, dukes, and certain lords clothed with official powers. A distinction was made between the greater and lesser *vair*. The very name has been so long disused, that in a vast number of editions of Perrault's famous tale, Cinderella's slipper, which was no doubt of *vair* (the fur), is said to have been made of *verre* (glass). Lately one of our most distinguished poets was obliged to establish the true orthography of the word for the instruction of his brother-feuilletonists in giving an account of the opéra of the "Cenerentola," where the symbolic slipper has been replaced by a ring, which symbolizes nothing at all.

Naturally the sumptuary laws about the wearing of fur were perpetually infringed upon, to the great satisfaction of the furriers. The costliness of stuffs and furs made a garment in those days a durable thing, — as lasting as the furniture, the armor, and other items of that strong life of the fifteenth century. A woman of rank, a seigneur, all rich men, also all the burghers, possessed at the most two garments for each season, which lasted their lifetime and beyond it. These garments were bequeathed to their children. Consequently the clause in the marriage-contract relating to arms and clothes, which in these days is almost a dead letter because of the small value of wardrobes that need constant renewing, was then of much importance. Great costs brought with them solidity. The toilet of a woman constituted a large capital; it was reckoned among the family possessions, and was kept in those

enormous chests which threaten to break through the floors of our modern houses. The jewels of a woman of 1840 would have been the *undress* ornaments of a great lady in 1540.

To-day, the discovery of America, the facilities of transportation, the ruin of social distinctions which has paved the way for the ruin of apparent distinctions, has reduced the trade of the furrier to what it now is, — next to nothing. The article which a furrier sells to-day, as in former days, for twenty *livres* has followed the depreciation of money: formerly the *livre*, which is now worth one franc and is usually so called, was worth twenty francs. To-day, the lesser bourgeoisie and the courtesans who edge their capes with sable, are ignorant that in 1440 an ill-disposed police-officer would have incontinently arrested them and marched them before the justice at the Châtelet. Englishwomen, who are so fond of ermine, do not know that in former times none but queens, duchesses, and chancellors were allowed to wear that royal fur. There are to-day in France several ennobled families whose true name is Pelletier or Lepelletier, the origin of which is evidently derived from some rich furrier's counter, for most of our burghers' names began in some such way.

This digression will explain, not only the long feud as to precedence which the guild of drapers maintained for two centuries against the guild of furriers and also of mercers (each claiming the right to walk first, as being the most important guild in Paris), but it will also serve to explain the importance of the Sieur Lecamus, a furrier honored with the custom of two queens, Catherine de' Medici and Mary Stuart, also the custom

of the parliament, — a man who for twenty years was the syndic of his corporation, and who lived in the street we have just described.

The house of Lecamus was one of three which formed the three angles of the open space at the end of the pont au Change, where nothing now remains but the tower of the Palais de Justice, which made the fourth angle. On the corner of this house, which stood at the angle of the pont au Change and the quai now called the quai aux Fleurs, the architect had constructed a little shrine for a Madonna, which was always lighted by wax-tapers and decked with real flowers in summer and artificial ones in winter. On the side of the house toward the rue du Pont, as on the side toward the rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie, the upper story of the house was supported by wooden pillars. All the houses in this mercantile quarter had an arcade behind these pillars, where the passers in the street walked under cover on a ground of trodden mud which kept the place always dirty. In all French towns these arcades or galleries are called *les piliers*, a generic term to which was added the name of the business transacted under them, — as “*piliers des Halles*” (markets), “*piliers de la Boucherie*” (butchers).

These galleries, a necessity in the Parisian climate, which is so changeable and so rainy, gave this part of the city a peculiar character of its own; but they have now disappeared. Not a single house on the river bank remains, and not more than about a hundred feet of the old “*piliers des Halles*” the last that have resisted the action of time, are left; and before long even that relic of the sombre labyrinth of old Paris will be demolished.

Certainly, the existence of such old ruins of the middle-ages is incompatible with the grandeurs of modern Paris. These observations are meant not so much to regret the destruction of the old town, as to preserve in words, and by the history of those who lived there, the memory of a place now turned to dust, and to excuse the following description, which may be precious to a future age now treading on the heels of our own.

The walls of this house were of wood covered with slate. The spaces between the uprights had been filled in, as we may still see in some provincial towns, with brick, so placed, by reversing their thickness, as to make a pattern called "Hungarian point." The window-casings and lintels, also in wood, were richly carved, and so was the corner pillar where it rose above the shrine of the Madonna, and all the other pillars in front of the house. Each window, and each main beam which separated the different storeys, was covered with arabesques of fantastic personages and animals wreathed with conventional foliage. On the street side, as on the river side, the house was capped with a roof looking as if two cards were set up one against the other, — thus presenting a gable to the street and a gable to the water. This roof, like the roof of a Swiss chalet, overhung the building so far that on the second floor there was an outside gallery with a balustrade, on which the owners of the house could walk under cover and survey the street, also the river basin between the bridges and the two lines of houses.

These houses on the river bank were very valuable. In those days a system of drains and fountains was still to be invented; nothing of the kind as yet existed

except the circuit sewer, constructed by Aubriot, provost of Paris under Charles the Wise, who also built the Bastille, the pont Saint-Michel and other bridges, and was the first man of genius who ever thought of the sanitary improvement of Paris. The houses situated like that of Lecamus took from the river the water necessary for the purposes of life, and also made the river serve as a natural drain for rain-water and household refuse. The great works that the "merchants' provosts" did in this direction are fast disappearing. Middle-aged persons alone can remember to have seen the great holes in the rue Montmartre, rue du Temple, etc., down which the waters poured. Those terrible open jaws were in the olden time of immense benefit to Paris. Their place will probably be forever marked by the sudden rise of the paved roadways at the spots where they opened, — another archæological detail which will be quite inexplicable to the historian two centuries hence. One day, about 1816, a little girl who was carrying a case of diamonds to an actress at the Ambigu, for her part as queen, was overtaken by a shower and so nearly washed down the great drainhole in the rue du Temple that she would have disappeared had it not been for a passer who heard her cries. Unluckily, she had let go the diamonds, which were, however, recovered later at a man-hole. This event made a great noise, and gave rise to many petitions against these engulfers of water and little girls. They were singular constructions about five feet high, furnished with iron railings, more or less movable, which often caused the inundation of the neighboring cellars, whenever the artificial river produced by sudden rains

was arrested in its course by the filth and refuse collected about these railings, which the owners of the abutting houses sometimes forgot to open.

The front of this shop of the *Sieur Lecamus* was all window, formed of sashes of leaded panes, which made the interior very dark. The furs were taken for selection to the houses of rich customers. As for those who came to the shop to buy, the goods were shown to them outside, between the pillars, — the arcade being, let us remark, encumbered during the day-time with tables, and clerks sitting on stools, such as we all remember seeing some fifteen years ago under the “*piliers des Halles*.” From these outposts, the clerks and apprentices talked, questioned, answered each other, and called to the passers, — customs which the great *Walter Scott* has made use of in his “*Fortunes of Nigel*.”

The sign, which represented an ermine, hung outside, as we still see in some village hostelries, from a rich bracket of gilded iron flagree. Above the ermine, on one side of the sign, were the words: —

LECAMVS

FURRIER

TO MADAME LA ROYNE ET DU ROY NOSTRE SIRE.

On the other side of the sign were the words: —

TO MADAME LA ROYNE-MÈRE

AND MESSIEURS DV PARLEMENT.

The words “*Madame la Royne-mère*” had been lately added. The gilding was fresh. This addition

showed the recent changes produced by the sudden and violent death of Henri II., which overturned many fortunes at court and began that of the Guises.

The back-shop opened on the river. In this room usually sat the respectable proprietor himself and Mademoiselle Lecamus. In those days the wife of a man who was not noble had no right to the title of dame, "madame;" but the wives of the burghers of Paris were allowed to use that of "mademoiselle," in virtue of privileges granted and confirmed to their husbands by the several kings to whom they had done service. Between this back-shop and the main shop was the well of a corkerew-staircase which gave access to the upper story, where were the great ware-room and the dwelling-rooms of the old couple, and the garrets lighted by skylights, where slept the children, the servant-woman, the apprentices, and the clerks.

This crowding of families, servants, and apprentices, the little space which each took up in the building where the apprentices all slept in one large chamber under the roof, explains the enormous population of Paris then agglomerated on one-tenth of the surface of the present city; also the queer details of private life in the middle ages; also, the contrivances of love which, with all due deference to historians, are found only in the pages of the romance-writers, without whom they would be lost to the world. At this period very great *seigneurs*, such, for instance, as Admiral de Coligny, occupied three rooms, and their suites lived at some neighboring inn. There were not, in those days, more than fifty private mansions in Paris, and those were fifty palaces belonging to sovereign princes, or to great

vassals, whose way of living was superior to that of the greatest German rulers, such as the Duke of Bavaria and the Elector of Saxony.

The kitchen of the Lecamus family was beneath the back-shop and looked out upon the river. It had a glass door opening upon a sort of iron balcony, from which the cook drew up water in a bucket, and where the household washing was done. The back-shop was made the dining-room, office, and salon of the merchant. In this important room (in all such houses richly panelled and adorned with some special work of art, and also a carved chest) the life of the merchant owner was passed; there the joyous suppers after the work of the day was over, there the secret conferences on the political interests of the burghers and of royalty took place. The formidable corporations of Paris were at that time able to arm a hundred thousand men. Therefore the opinions of the merchants were backed by their servants, their clerks, their apprentices, their workmen. The burghers had a chief in the "provost of the merchants" who commanded them, and in the Hôtel de Ville, a palace where they possessed the right to assemble. In the famous "burghers' parlor" their solemn deliberations took place. Had it not been for the continual sacrifices which by that time made war intolerable to the corporations, who were weary of their losses and of the famine, Henry IV., that factionist who became king, might never perhaps have entered Paris.

Every one can now picture to himself the appearance of this corner of old Paris, where the bridge and quai still are, where the trees of the quai aux Fleurs now stand, but where no trace remains of the period of

which we write except the tall and famous tower of the Palais de Justice, from which the signal was given for the Saint Bartholomew. Strange circumstance! one of the houses standing at the foot of that tower then surrounded by wooden shops, that, namely, of Lecamus, was about to witness the birth of facts which were destined to prepare for that night of massacre, which was, unhappily, more favorable than fatal to Calvinism.

At the moment when our history begins, the audacity of the new religious doctrines was putting all Paris in a ferment. A Scotchman named Stuart had just assassinated President Minard, the member of the Parliament to whom public opinion attributed the largest share in the execution of Councillor Anne du Bourg; who was burned on the place de Grève after the king's tailor—to whom Henri II. and Diane de Poitiers had caused the torture of the "question" to be applied in their very presence. Paris was so closely watched that the archers compelled all passers along the street to pray before the shrines of the Madonna so as to discover heretics by their unwillingness or even refusal to do an act contrary to their beliefs.

The two archers who were stationed at the corner of the Lecamus house had departed, and Christophe, son of the furrier, vehemently suspected of deserting Catholicism, was able to leave the shop without fear of being made to adore the Virgin. By seven in the evening, in April, 1560, darkness was already falling, and the apprentices, seeing no signs of customers on either side of the arcade, were beginning to take in the merchandise exposed as samples beneath the pillars, in order to close the shop. Christopher Lecamus, an ardent

young man about twenty-two years old, was standing on the sill of the shop-door, apparently watching the apprentices.

"Monsieur," said one of them, addressing Christophe and pointing to a man who was walking to and fro under the gallery with an air of indecision, "perhaps that's a thief or a spy; anyhow, the shabby wretch can't be an honest man; if he wanted to speak to us he would come over frankly, instead of sidling along as he does — and what a face!" continued the apprentice, mimicking the man, "with his nose in his cloak, his yellow eyes, and that famished look!"

When the stranger thus described caught sight of Christophe alone on the door-sill, he suddenly left the opposite gallery where he was then walking, crossed the street rapidly, and came under the arcade in front of the Lecamus house. There he passed slowly along in front of the shop, and before the apprentices returned to close the outer shutters he said to Christophe in a low voice: —

"I am Chaudieu."

Hearing the name of one of the most illustrious ministers and devoted actors in the terrible drama called "The Reformation," Christophe quivered as a faithful peasant might have quivered on recognizing his disguised king.

"Perhaps you would like to see some furs? Though it is almost dark I will show you some myself," said Christophe, wishing to throw the apprentices, whom he heard behind him, off the scent.

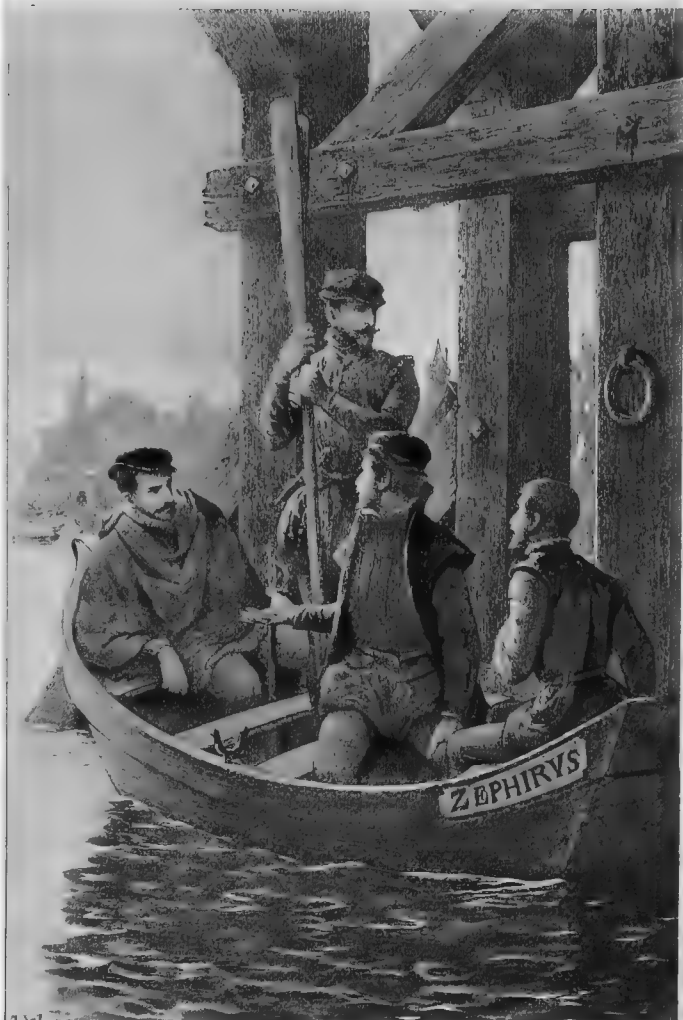
With a wave of his hand he invited the minister to enter the shop, but the latter replied that he pre-

ferred to converse outside. Christophe then fetched his cap and followed the disciple of Calvin.

Though banished by an edict, Chaudieu, the secret envoy of Théodore de Bèze and Calvin (who were directing the French Reformation from Geneva), went and came, risking the cruel punishment to which the Parliament, in unison with the Church and Royalty, had condemned one of their number, the celebrated Anne du Bourg, in order to make a terrible example. Chaudieu, whose brother was a captain and one of Admiral Coligny's best soldiers, was a powerful auxiliary by whose arm Calvin shook France at the beginning of the twenty-two years of religious warfare now on the point of breaking out. This minister was one of the hidden wheels whose movements can best exhibit the wide-spread action of the Reform.

Chaudieu led Christophe to the water's edge through an underground passage, which was like that of the Marion tunnel filled up by the authorities about ten years ago. This passage, which was situated between the Lecamus house and the one adjoining it, ran under the rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie, and was called the Pont-aux-Fourreurs. It was used by the dyers of the City to go to the river and wash their flax and silks, and other stuffs. A little boat was at the entrance of it, rowed by a single sailor. In the bow was a man unknown to Christophe, a man of low stature and very simply dressed. Chaudieu and Christophe entered the boat, which in a moment was in the middle of the Seine; the sailor then directed its course beneath one of the wooden arches of the pont au Change, where he tied up quickly to an iron ring. As yet, no one had said a word.

“ Here we can speak without fear.”



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Cap. Zephyr 1894 by Robert B. Bosc

Proced. Coup.

"Here we can speak without fear; there are no traitors or spies here," said Chaudieu, looking at the two as yet unnamed men. Then, turning an ardent face to Christophe, "Are you," he said, "full of that devotion that should animate a martyr? Are you ready to endure all for our sacred cause? Do you fear the tortures applied to the Councillor du Bourg, to the king's tailor, — tortures which await the majority of us?"

"I shall confess the gospel," replied Lecamus, simply, looking at the windows of his father's back-shop.

The family lamp, standing on the table where his father was making up his books for the day, spoke to him, no doubt, of the joys of family and the peaceful existence which he now renounced. The vision was rapid, but complete. His mind took in, at a glance, the burgher quarter full of its own harmonies, where his happy childhood had been spent, where lived his promised bride, Babette Lallier, where all things promised him a sweet and full existence; he saw the past; he saw the future, and he sacrificed it, or, at any rate, he staked it all. Such were the men of that day.

"We need ask no more," said the impetuous sailor; "we know him for one of our *saints*. If the Scotchman had not done the deed he would kill us that infamous Minard."

"Yes," said Lecamus, "my life belongs to the Church; I shall give it with joy for the triumph of the Reformation, on which I have seriously reflected. I know that what we do is for the happiness of the peoples. In two words: popery drives to celibacy; the

Reformation establishes the family. It is time to rid France of her monks, to restore their lands to the Crown, who will, sooner or later, sell them to the burghers. Let us learn to die for our children, and make our families some day free and prosperous."

The face of the young enthusiast, that of Chaudieu, that of the sailor, that of the stranger seated in the bow, lighted by the last gleams of the twilight, formed a picture which ought the more to be described because the description contains in itself the whole history of the times — if it is, indeed, true that to certain men it is given to sum up in their own persons the spirit of their age.

The religious reform undertaken by Luther in Germany, John Knox in Scotland, Calvin in France, took hold especially of those minds in the lower classes into which thought had penetrated. The great lords sustained the movement only to serve interests that were foreign to the religious cause. To these two classes were added adventurers, ruined noblemen, younger sons, to whom all troubles were equally acceptable. But among the artisan and merchant classes the new faith was sincere and based on calculation. The masses of the poorer people adhered at once to a religion which gave the ecclesiastical property to the State, and deprived the dignitaries of the Church of their enormous revenues. Commerce everywhere reckoned up the profits of this religious operation, and devoted itself body, soul, and purse, to the cause.

But among the young men of the French bourgeoisie the Protestant movement found that noble inclination to sacrifices of all kinds which inspires youth, to which

selfishness is, as yet, unknown. Eminent men, sagacious minds, discerned the Republic in the Reformation; they desired to establish throughout Europe the government of the United Provinces, which ended by triumphing over the greatest Power of those times, — Spain, under Philip the Second, represented in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva. Jean Hotoman was then meditating his famous book, in which this project is put forth, — a book which spread throughout France the leaven of these ideas, which were stirred up anew by the Ligue, repressed by Richelieu, then by Louis XIV., always protected by the younger branches, by the house of Orléans in 1789, as by the house of Bourbon in 1589. Whoso says “Investigate” says “Revolt.” All revolt is either the cloak that hides a prince, or the swaddling-clothes of a new mastery. The house of Bourbon, the younger sons of the Valois, were at work beneath the surface of the Reformation.

At the moment when the little boat floated beneath the arch of the pont au Change the question was strangely complicated by the ambition of the Guises, who were rivalling the Bourbons. Thus the Crown, represented by Catherine de' Medici, was able to sustain the struggle for thirty years by pitting the one house against the other house; whereas later, the Crown, instead of standing between various jealous ambitions, found itself without a barrier, face to face with the people: Richelieu and Louis XIV. had broken down the barrier of the Nobility; Louis XV. had broken down that of the Parliaments. Alone before the people, as Louis XVI. was, a king must inevitably succumb.

Christophe Lecamus was a fine representative of the ardent and devoted portion of the people. His wan face had the sharp hectic tones which distinguish certain fair complexions; his hair was yellow, of a coppery shade; his gray-blue eyes were sparkling. In them alone was his fine soul visible; for his ill-proportioned face did not atone for its triangular shape by the noble mien of an elevated mind, and his low forehead indicated only extreme energy. Life seemed to centre in his chest, which was rather hollow. More nervous than sanguine, Christophe's bodily appearance was thin and threadlike, but wiry. His pointed nose expressed the shrewdness of the people, and his countenance revealed an intelligence capable of conducting itself well on a single point of the circumference, without having the faculty of seeing all around it. His eyes, the arching brows of which, scarcely covered with a whitish down, projected like an awning, were strongly circled by a pale-blue band, the skin being white and shining at the spring of the nose, — a sign which almost always denotes excessive enthusiasm. Christophe was of the people, — the people who devote themselves, who fight for their devotions, who let themselves be inveigled and betrayed; intelligent enough to comprehend and serve an idea, too upright to turn it to his own account, too noble to sell himself.

Contrasting with this son of Lecamus, Chaudieu, the ardent minister, with brown hair thinned by vigils, a yellow skin, an eloquent mouth, a militant brow, with flaming brown eyes, and a short and prominent chin, embodied well the Christian faith which brought to the Reformation so many sincere and fanatical pas-

tors, whose courage and spirit aroused the populations. The aide-de-camp of Calvin and Théodore de Bèze contrasted admirably with the son of the furrier. He represented the fiery cause of which the effect was seen in Christophe.

The sailor, an impetuous being, tanned by the open air, accustomed to dewy nights and burning days, with closed lips, hasty gestures, orange eyes, ravenous as those of a vulture, and black, frizzled hair, was the embodiment of the adventurer who risks all in a venture, as a gambler stakes all on a card. His whole appearance revealed terrific passions, and an audacity that flinched at nothing. His vigorous muscles were made to be quiescent as well as to act. His manner was more audacious than noble. His nose, though thin, turned up and snuffed battle. He seemed agile and capable. You would have known him in all ages for the leader of a party. If he were not of the Reformation, he might have been Pizarro, Fernando Cortez, or Morgan the Exterminator, — a man of violent action of some kind.

The fourth man, sitting on a thwart wrapped in his cloak, belonged, evidently, to the highest portion of society. The fineness of his linen, its cut, the material and scent of his clothing, the style and skin of his gloves, showed him to be a man of courts, just as his bearing, his haughtiness, his composure and his all-embracing glance proved him to be a man of war. The aspect of this personage made a spectator uneasy in the first place, and then inclined him to respect. We respect a man who respects himself. Though short and deformed, his manners instantly redeemed

the disadvantage of his figure. The ice once broken, he showed a lively rapidity of decision, with an indefinable dash and fire which made him seem affable and winning. He had the blue eyes and the curved nose of the house of Navarre, and the Spanish cut of the marked features which were in after days the type of the Bourbon kings.

In a word, the scene now assumed a startling interest.

"Well," said Chaudieu, as young Lecamus ended his speech, "this boatman is La Renaudie. And here is Monseigneur the Prince de Condé," he added, motioning to the deformed little man.

Thus these four men represented the faith of the people, the spirit of the Scriptures, the mailed hand of the soldier, and royalty itself hidden in that dark shadow of the bridge.

"You shall now know what we expect of you," resumed the minister, after allowing a short pause for Christophe's astonishment. "In order that you may make no mistake, we feel obliged to initiate you into the most important secrets of the Reformation."

The prince and La Renaudie emphasized the minister's speech by a gesture, the latter having paused to allow the prince to speak, if he so wished. Like all great men engaged in plotting, whose system it is to conceal their hand until the decisive moment, the prince kept silence — but not from cowardice. In these crises he was always the soul of the conspiracy; recoiling before no danger and ready to risk his own head; but from a sort of royal dignity he left the explanation of the enterprise to his minister, and contented himself with studying the new instrument he was about to use.

“My child,” said Chaudieu, in the Huguenot style of address, “we are about to do battle for the first time with the Roman prostitute. In a few days either our legions will be dying on the scaffold, or the Guises will be dead. This is the first call to arms on behalf of our religion in France, and France will not lay down those arms till they have conquered. The question, mark you this, concerns the nation, not the kingdom. The majority of the nobles of the kingdom see plainly what the Cardinal de Lorraine and his brother are seeking. Under pretext of defending the Catholic religion, the house of Lorraine means to claim the crown of France as its patrimony. Relying on the Church, it has made the Church a formidable ally; the monks are its support, its acolytes, its spies. It has assumed the post of guardian to the throne it is seeking to usurp; it protects the house of Valois which it means to destroy. We have decided to take up arms because the liberties of the people and the interests of the nobles are equally threatened. Let us smother at its birth a faction as odious as that of the Burgundians who formerly put Paris and all France to fire and sword. It required a Louis XI. to put a stop to the quarrel between the Burgundians and the Crown; and to-day a Prince de Condé is needed to prevent the house of Lorraine from re-attempting that struggle. This is not a civil war; it is a duel between the Guises and the Reformation,—a duel to the death! We will make their heads fall, or they shall have ours.”

“Well said!” cried the prince.

“In this crisis, Christophe,” said La Renaudie, “we mean to neglect nothing which shall strengthen our party

— for there is a party in the Reformation, the party of thwarted interests, of nobles sacrificed to the Lorrains, of old captains shamefully treated at Fontainebleau, from which the cardinal has banished them by setting up gibbets on which to hang those who ask the king for the cost of their equipment and their back-pay.”

“ This, my child,” resumed Chaudieu, observing a sort of terror in Christophe, “ this it is which compels us to conquer by arms instead of conquering by conviction and by martyrdom. The queen-mother is on the point of entering into our views. Not that she means to abjure ; she has not reached that decision as yet ; but she may be forced to it by our triumph. However that may be, Queen Catherine, humiliated and in despair at seeing the power she expected to wield on the death of the king passing into the hands of the Guises, alarmed at the empire of the young queen, Mary, niece of the Lorrains and their auxiliary, Queen Catherine is doubtless inclined to lend her support to the princes and lords who are now about to make an attempt which will deliver her from the Guises. At this moment, devoted as she may seem to them, she hates them ; she desires their overthrow, and will try to make use of us against them ; but Monseigneur the Prince de Condé intends to make use of her against all. The queen-mother will, undoubtedly, consent to all our plans. We shall have the Connétable on our side ; Monseigneur has just been to see him at Chantilly ; but he does not wish to move without an order from his masters. Being the uncle of Monseigneur, he will not leave him in the lurch ; and this generous prince does not hesitate to fling himself into danger to force Anne de Montmorency

to a decision. All is prepared, and we have cast our eyes on you as the means of communicating to Queen Catherine our treaty of alliance, the drafts of edicts, and the bases of the new government. The court is at Blois. Many of our friends are with it; but they are to be our future chiefs; and, like Monseigneur," he added, motioning to the prince, "they must not be suspected. The queen-mother and our friends are so closely watched that it is impossible to employ as intermediary any known person of importance; they would instantly be suspected and kept from communicating with Madame Catherine. God sends us at this crisis the shepherd David and his sling to do battle with Goliath of Guise. Your father, unfortunately for him a good Catholic, is furrier to the two queens. He is constantly supplying them with garments. Get him to send you on some errand to the court. You will excite no suspicion, and you cannot compromise Queen Catherine in any way. All our leaders would lose their heads if a single imprudent act allowed their connivance with the queen-mother to be seen. Where a great lord, if discovered, would give the alarm and destroy our chances, an insignificant man like you will pass unnoticed. See! The Guises keep the town so full of spies that we have only the river where we can talk without fear. You are now, my son, like a sentinel who must die at his post. Remember this: if you are discovered, we shall all abandon you; we shall even cast, if necessary, opprobrium and infamy upon you. We shall say that you are a creature of the Guises, made to play this part to ruin us. You see therefore that we ask of you a total sacrifice."

"If you perish," said the Prince de Condé, "I

pledge my honor as a noble that your family shall be sacred for the house of Navarre; I will bear it on my heart and serve it in all things."

"Those words, my prince, suffice," replied Christophe, without reflecting that the conspirator was a Gascon. "We live in times when each man; prince or burgher, must do his duty."

"There speaks the true Huguenot. If all our men were like that," said La Renaudie, laying his hand on Christophe's shoulder, "we should be conquerors to-morrow."

"Young man," resumed the prince, "I desire to show you that if Chaudieu preaches, if the nobleman goes armed, the prince fights. Therefore, in this hot game all stakes are played."

"Now listen to me," said La Renaudie. "I will not give you the papers until you reach Beaugency; for they must not be risked during the whole of your journey. You will find me waiting for you there on the wharf; my face, voice, and clothes will be so changed you cannot recognize me, but I shall say to you, 'Are you a *guêpin*?' and you will answer, 'Ready to serve.' As to the performance of your mission, these are the means: You will find a horse at the "Pinte Fleurie," close to Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. You will there ask for Jean le Breton, who will take you to the stable and give you one of my ponies which is known to do thirty leagues in eight hours. Leave by the gate of Bussy. Breton has a pass for me; use it yourself, and make your way by skirting the towns. You can thus reach Orléans by daybreak."

"But the horse?" said young Lecamus.

"He will not give out till you reach Orléans," replied La Renaudie. "Leave him at the entrance of the faubourg Bannier; for the gates are well guarded, and you must not excite suspicion. It is for you, friend, to play your part intelligently. You must invent whatever fable seems to you best to reach the third house to the left on entering Orléans; it belongs to a certain Tourillon, glove-maker. Strike three blows on the door, and call out: 'On service from Messieurs de Guise!' The man will appear to be a rabid Guisist; no one knows but our four selves that he is one of us. He will give you a faithful boatman, — another Guisist of his own cut. Go down at once to the wharf, and embark in a boat painted green and edged with white. You will doubtless land at Beaugency to-morrow about mid-day. There I will arrange to find you a boat which will take you to Blois without running any risk. Our enemies the Guises do not watch the rivers, only the landings. Thus you will be able to see the queen-mother to-morrow or the day after."

"Your words are written there," said Christophe, touching his forehead.

Chaudieu embraced his child with singular religious effusion; he was proud of him.

"God keep thee!" he said, pointing to the ruddy light of the sinking sun, which was touching the old roofs covered with shingles and sending its gleams slantwise through the forest of piles among which the water was rippling.

"You belong to the race of the Jacques Bonhomme," said La Renaudie, pressing Christophe's hand.

"We shall meet again, *monsieur*," said the prince,

with a gesture of infinite grace, in which there was something that seemed almost friendship.

With a stroke of his oars La Renaudie put the boat at the lower step of the stairway which led to the house. Christophe landed, and the boat disappeared instantly beneath the arches of the pont au Change.

II.

THE BURGHERS.

CHRISTOPHE shook the iron railing which closed the stairway on the river, and called. His mother heard him, opened one of the windows of the back shop, and asked what he was doing there. Christophe answered that he was cold and wanted to get in.

“Ha! my master,” said the Burgundian maid, “you went out by the street-door, and you return by the water-gate. Your father will be fine and angry.”

Christophe, bewildered by a confidence which had just brought him into communication with the Prince de Condé, La Renaudie, and Chaudieu, and still more moved at the prospect of impending civil war, made no answer; he ran hastily up from the kitchen to the back shop; but his mother, a rabid Catholic, could not control her anger.

“I’ll wager those three men I saw you talking with are Ref—”

“Hold your tongue, wife!” said the cautious old man with white hair who was turning over a thick ledger. “You dawdling fellows,” he went on, addressing three journeymen, who had long finished their suppers, “why don’t you go to bed? It is eight o’clock, and you have to be up at five; besides, you must carry home to-night President de Thou’s cap and mantle.

All three of you had better go, and take your sticks and rapiers; and then, if you meet scamps like yourselves, at least you'll be in force."

"Are we also to take the ermine surcoat the young queen has ordered to be sent to the hôtel des Soissons? there's an express going from there to Blois for the queen-mother," said one of the clerks.

"No," said his master, "the queen-mother's bill amounts to three thousand crowns; it is time to get the money, and I am going to Blois myself very soon."

"Father, I do not think it is right at your age and in these dangerous times to expose yourself on the high-roads. I am twenty-two years old, and you ought to employ me on such errands," said Christophe, eyeing the box which he supposed contained the surcoat.

"Are you glued to your seats?" cried the old man to his apprentices, who at once jumped up and seized their rapiers, cloaks, and Monsieur de Thou's furs.

The next day the Parliament was to receive in state, as its president, this illustrious judge, who, after signing the death warrant of Councillor du Bourg, was destined before the close of the year to sit in judgment on the Prince de Condé!

"Here!" said the old man, calling to the maid, "go and ask friend Lallier if he will come and sup with us and bring the wine; we'll furnish the victuals. Tell him, above all, to bring his daughter."

Lecamus, the syndic of the guild of furriers, was a handsome old man of sixty, with white hair, and a broad, open brow. As court furrier for the last forty years, he had witnessed all the revolutions of the reign of François I. He had seen the arrival at the French

court of the young girl Catherine de' Medici, then scarcely fifteen years of age. He had observed her giving way before the Duchesse d'Étampes, her father-in-law's mistress; giving way before the Duchesse de Valentinois, the mistress of her husband the late king. But the furrier had brought himself safely through all the chances and changes by which court merchants were often involved in the disgrace and overthrow of mistresses. His caution led to his good luck. He maintained an attitude of extreme humility. Pride had never caught him in its toils. He made himself so small, so gentle, so compliant, of so little account at court and before the queens and princesses and favorites, that this modesty, combined with good-humor, had kept the royal sign above his door.

Such a policy was, of course, indicative of a shrewd and perspicacious mind. Humble as Lecamus seemed to the outer world, he was despotic in his own home; there he was an autocrat. Much respected and honored by his brother craftsmen, he owed to his long possession of the first place in the trade much of the consideration that was shown to him. He was, besides, very willing to do kindnesses to others, and among the many services he had rendered, none was more striking than the assistance he had long given to the greatest surgeon of the sixteenth century, Ambroise Paré, who owed to him the possibility of studying for his profession. In all the difficulties which came up among the merchants Lecamus was always conciliating. Thus a general good opinion of him consolidated his position among his equals; while his borrowed characteristics kept him steadily in favor with the court.

Not only this, but having intrigued for the honor of being on the vestry of his parish church, he did what was necessary to bring him into the odor of sanctity with the rector of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs, who looked upon him as one of the men most devoted to the Catholic religion in Paris. Consequently, at the time of the convocation of the States-General he was unanimously elected to represent the *tiers état* through the influence of the clergy of Paris, — an influence which at that period was immense. This old man was, in short, one of those secretly ambitious souls who will bend for fifty years before all the world, gliding from office to office, no one exactly knowing how it came about that he was found securely and peacefully seated at last where no man, even the boldest, would have had the ambition at the beginning of life to fancy himself; so great was the distance, so many the gulfs and the precipices to cross! Lecamus, who had immense concealed wealth, would not run any risks, and was silently preparing a brilliant future for his son. Instead of having the personal ambition which sacrifices the future to the present, he had family ambition, — a lost sentiment in our time, a sentiment suppressed by the folly of our laws of inheritance. Lecamus saw himself first president of the Parliament of Paris in the person of his grandson.

Christophe, godson of the famous historian de Thou, was given a most solid education; but it had led him to doubt and to the spirit of examination which was then affecting both the Faculties and the students of the universities. Christophe was, at the period of which we are now writing, pursuing his studies for the bar, that first step toward the magistracy. The old furrier

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was pretending to some hesitation as to his son. Sometimes he seemed to wish to make Christophe his successor ; then again he spoke of him as a lawyer ; but in his heart he was ambitious of a place for this son as Councillor of the Parliament. He wanted to put the Lecamus family on a level with those old and celebrated burgher families from which came the Pasquiers, the Molés, the Miron, the Séguier, Lamoignon, du Tillet, Lecoigneux, Lescapier, Goix, Arnould, those famous sheriffs and grand-provosts of the merchants, among whom the throne found such strong defenders.

Therefore, in order that Christophe might in due course of time maintain his rank, he wished to marry him to the daughter of the richest jeweller in the city, his friend Lallier, whose nephew was destined to present to Henri IV. the keys of Paris. The strongest desire rooted in the heart of the worthy burgher was to employ half of his fortune and half of that of the jeweller in the purchase of a large and beautiful seignorial estate, which, in those days, was a long and very difficult affair. But his shrewd mind knew the age in which he lived too well to be ignorant of the great movements which were now in preparation. He saw clearly, and he saw justly, and knew that the kingdom was about to be divided into two camps. The useless executions in the Place de L'Estrapade, that of the king's tailor and the more recent one of the Councillor Anne du Bourg, the actual connivance of the great lords, and that of the favorite of François I. with the Reformers, were terrible indications. The furrier resolved to remain, whatever happened, Catholic, royalist, and parliamentarian ; but it suited him, privately, that Christophe should

belong to the Reformation. He knew he was rich enough to ransom his son if Christophe was too much compromised; and, on the other hand if France became Calvinist his son could save the family in the event of one of those furious Parisian riots, the memory of which was ever-living with the bourgeoisie, — riots they were destined to see renewed through four reigns.

But these thoughts the old furrier, like Louis XI., did not even say to himself; his wariness went so far as to deceive his wife and son. This grave personage had long been the chief man of the richest and most populous quarter of Paris, that of the centre, under the title of *quartenier*, — the title and office which became so celebrated some fifteen months later. Clothed in cloth like all the prudent burghers who obeyed the sumptuary laws, *Sieur Lecamus* (he was tenacious of that title which Charles V. granted to the burghers of Paris, permitting them also to buy baronial estates and call their wives by the fine name of *demoiselle*, but not by that of madame) wore neither gold chains nor silk, but always a good doublet with large tarnished silver buttons, cloth gaiters mounting to the knee, and leather shoes with clasps. His shirt, of fine linen, showed, according to the fashion of the time, in great puffs between his half-opened jacket and his breeches. Though his large and handsome face received the full light of the lamp standing on the table, Christophe had no conception of the thoughts that lay buried beneath the rich and florid Dutch skin of the old man; but he understood well enough the advantage he himself had expected to obtain from his affection for pretty Babette Lallier. So Christophe,

with the air of a man who has come to a decision, smiled bitterly as he heard of the invitation to his promised bride.

When the Burgundian cook and the apprentices had departed on their several errands, old Lecamus looked at his wife with a glance which showed the firmness and resolution of his character.

"You will not be satisfied till you have got that boy hanged with your damned tongue," he said, in a stern voice.

"I would rather see him hanged and saved than living and a Huguenot," she answered, gloomily. "To think that a child whom I carried nine months in my womb should be a bad Catholic, and be doomed to hell for all eternity!"

She began to weep.

"Old silly," said the furrier; "let him live, if only to convert him. You said, before the apprentices, a word which may set fire to our house, and roast us all, like fleas in a straw bed."

The mother crossed herself, and sat down silently.

"Now, then, you," said the old man, with a judicial glance at his son, "explain to me what you were doing on the river with—come closer, that I may speak to you," he added, grasping his son by the arm, and drawing him to him—"with the Prince de Condé." he whispered. Christophe trembled. "Do you suppose the court furrier does not know every face that frequents the palace? Think you I am ignorant of what is going on? Monseigneur the Grand Master has been giving orders to send troops to Amboise. Withdrawing troops from Paris to send them to Am-

boise when the king is at Blois, and making them march through Chartres and Vendôme, instead of going by Orléans—isn't the meaning of that clear enough? There'll be troubles. If the queens want their surcoats, they must send for them. The Prince de Condé has perhaps made up his mind to kill Messieurs de Guise; who, on their side, expect to rid themselves of him. The prince will use the Huguenots to protect himself. Why should the son of a furrier get himself into that fray? When you are married, and when you are councillor to the Parliament, you will be as prudent as your father. Before belonging to the new religion, the son of a furrier ought to wait till the rest of the world belongs to it. I don't condemn the Reformers; it is not my business to do so; but the court is Catholic, the two queens are Catholic, the Parliament is Catholic; we supply them with furs, and therefore we must be Catholic ourselves. You shall not go out from here, Christophe; if you do, I will send you to your godfather, President de Thou, who will keep you night and day blackening paper, instead of blackening your soul in company with those damned Genevese."

"Father," said Christophe, leaning upon the back of the old man's chair, "send me to Blois to carry that surcoat to Queen Mary and get our money from the queen-mother. If you do not, I am lost; and you care for your son."

"Lost?" repeated the old man, without showing the least surprise. "If you stay here you can't be lost; I shall have my eye upon you all the time."

"They will kill me here."

"Why?"

"The most powerful among the Huguenots have cast their eyes on me to serve them in a certain matter; if I fail to do what I have just promised to do, they will kill me in open day, here in the street, as they killed Minard. But if you send me to court on your affairs, perhaps I can justify myself equally well to both sides. Either I shall succeed without having run any danger at all, and shall then win a fine position in the party; or, if the danger turns out very great, I shall be there simply on your business."

The father rose as if his chair was of red-hot iron.

"Wife," he said, "leave us; and watch that we are left quite alone, Christophe and I."

When Mademoiselle Lecamus had left them the furrier took his son by a button and led him to the corner of the room which made the angle of the bridge.

"Christophe," he said, whispering in his ear as he had done when he mentioned the name of the Prince of Condé, "be a Huguenot, if you have that vice; but be so cautiously, in the depths of your soul, and not in a way to be pointed at as a heretic throughout the quarter. What you have just confessed to me shows that the leaders have confidence in you. What are you going to do for them at court?"

"I cannot tell you that," replied Christophe; "for I do not know myself."

"Hum! hum!" muttered the old man, looking at his son, "the scamp means to hoodwink his father; he'll go far. You are not going to court," he went on in a low tone, "to carry remittances to Messieurs de Guise or to the little king our master, or to the little Queen Marie. All those hearts are Catholic; but I would

take my oath the Italian woman has some spite against the Scotch girl and against the Lorrains. I know her. She had a desperate desire to put her hand into the dough. The late king was so afraid of her that he did as the jewellers do, he cut diamond by diamond, he pitted one woman against another. That caused Queen Catherine's hatred to the poor Duchesse de Valentinois, from whom she took the beautiful château of Chenonceaux. If it hadn't been for the Connétable, the duchess might have been strangled. Back, back, my son; don't put yourself in the hands of that Italian, who has no passion except in her brain; and that's a bad kind of woman! Yes, what they are sending you to do at court may give you a very bad headache," cried the father, seeing that Christophe was about to reply. "My son, I have plans for your future which you will not upset by making yourself useful to Queen Catherine; but, heavens and earth! don't risk your head. Messieurs de Guise would cut it off as easily as the Burgundian cuts a turnip, and then those persons who are now employing you will disown you utterly."

"I know that, father," said Christophe.

"What! are you really so strong, my son? You know it, and are willing to risk all?"

"Yes, father."

"By the powers above us!" cried the father, pressing his son in his arms, "we can understand each other; you are worthy of your father. My child, you'll be the honor of the family, and I see that your old father can speak plainly with you. But do not be more Huguenot than Messieurs de Coligny. Never draw your sword; be a pen man; keep to your future rôle of

lawyer. Now, then, tell me nothing until after you have succeeded. If I do not hear from you by the fourth day after you reach Blois, that silence will tell me that you are in some danger. The old man will go to save the young one. I have not sold furs for thirty-two years without a good knowledge of the wrong side of court robes. I have the means of making my way through many doors."

Christophe opened his eyes very wide as he heard his father talking thus; but he thought there might be some parental trap in it, and he made no reply further than to say:—

"Well, make out the bill, and write a letter to the queen; I must start at once, or the greatest misfortunes may happen."

"Start? How?"

"I shall buy a horse. Write at once, in God's name."

"Hey! mother! give your son some money," cried the furrier to his wife.

The mother returned, went to her chest, took out a purse of gold, and gave it to Christophe, who kissed her with emotion.

"The bill was all ready," said his father; "here it is. I will write the letter at once."

Christophe took the bill and put it in his pocket.

"But you will sup with us, at any rate," said the old man. "In such a crisis you ought to exchange rings with Lallier's daughter."

"Very well, I will go and fetch her," said Christophe.

The young man was distrustful of his father's stability in the matter. The old man's character was not yet

fully known to him. He ran up to his room, dressed himself, took a valise, came downstairs softly and laid it on a counter in the shop, together with his rapier and cloak.

"What the devil are you doing?" asked his father, hearing him.

Christophe came up to the old man and kissed him on both cheeks.

"I don't want any one to see my preparations for departure, and I have put them on a counter in the shop," he whispered.

"Here is the letter," said his father.

Christophe took the paper and went out as if to fetch his young neighbor.

A few moments after his departure the goodman Lallier and his daughter arrived, preceded by a servant-woman, bearing three bottles of old wine.

"Well, where is Christophe?" said old Lecamus.

"Christophe!" exclaimed Babette. "We have not seen him."

"Ha! ha! my son is a bold scamp! He tricks me as if I had no beard. My dear crony, what think you he will turn out to be? We live in days when the children have more sense than their fathers."

"Why, the quarter has long been saying he is in some mischief," said Lallier.

"Excuse him on that point, crony," said the furrier. "Youth is foolish; it runs after new things; but Babette will keep him quiet; she is newer than Calvin."

"Babette smiled; she loved Christophe, and was angry when anything was said against him. She was one of those daughters of the old bourgeoisie brought

up under the eyes of a mother who never left her. Her bearing was gentle and correct as her face; she always wore woollen stuffs of gray, harmonious in tone; her chemisette, simply pleated, contrasted its whiteness against the gown. Her cap of brown velvet was like an infant's coif, but it was trimmed with a ruche and lappets of tanned gauze, that is, of a tan color, which came down on each side of her face. Though fair and white as a true blonde, she seemed to be shrewd and roguish, all the while trying to hide her roguishness under the air and manner of a well-trained girl. While the two servant-women went and came, laying the cloth and placing the jugs, the great pewter dishes, and the knives and forks, the jeweller and his daughter, the furrier and his wife, sat before the tall chimney-piece draped with lambrequins of red serge and black fringes, and were talking of trifles. Babette asked once or twice where Christophe could be, and the father and mother of the young Huguenot gave evasive answers; but when the two families were seated at table, and the two servants had retired to the kitchen, Lecamus said to his future daughter-in-law: —

“Christophe has gone to court.”

“To Blois! Such a journey as that without bidding me good-bye!” she said.

“The matter was pressing,” said the old mother.

“Crony,” said the furrier, resuming a suspended conversation. “We are going to have troublous times in France. The Reformers are bestirring themselves.”

“If they triumph, it will only be after a long war, during which business will be at a standstill.” said

Lallier, incapable of rising higher than the commercial sphere.

“ My father, who saw the wars between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs told me that our family would never have come out safely if one of his grandfathers — his mother’s father — had not been a Goix, one of those famous butchers in the Market who stood by the Burgundians ; whereas the other, the Lecamus, was for the Armagnacs ; they seemed ready to flay each other alive before the world, but they were excellent friends in the family. So, let us both try to save Christophe ; perhaps the time may come when he will save us.”

“ You are a shrewd one,” said the jeweller.

“ No,” replied Lecamus. “ The burghers ought to think of themselves ; the populace and the nobility are both against them. The Parisian bourgeoisie alarms everybody except the king, who knows it is his friend.

“ You who are so wise and have seen so many things,” said Babette, timidly, “ explain to me what the Reformers really want.”

“ Yes, tell us that, crony,” cried the jeweller. “ I knew the late king’s tailor, and I held him to be a man of simple life, without great talent ; he was something like you ; a man to whom they’d give the sacrament without confession ; and behold ! he plunged to the depths of this new religion, — he ! a man whose two ears were worth all of a hundred thousand crowns apiece. He must have had secrets to reveal to induce the king and the Duchesse de Valentinois to be present at his torture.”

“ And terrible secrets, too ! ” said the furrier, “ The

Reformation, my friends," he continued in a low voice, "will give back to the bourgeoisie the estates of the Church. When the ecclesiastical privileges are suppressed the Reformers intend to ask that the *villain* tax shall be imposed on nobles as well as on burghers, and they mean to insist that the king alone shall be above others — if indeed, they allow the State to have a king."

"Suppress the Throne!" ejaculated Lallier.

"Hey! crony," said Lecamus, "in the Low Countries the burghers govern themselves with burgomasters of their own, who elect their own temporary head."

"God bless me, crony; we ought to do these fine things and yet stay Catholics," cried the jeweller.

"We are too old, you and I, to see the triumph of the Parisian bourgeoisie, but it will triumph, I tell you, in times to come as it did of yore. Ha! the king must rest upon it in order to resist, and we have always sold him our help dear. The last time, all the burghers were ennobled, and he gave them permission to buy seignorial estates and take titles from the land without special letters from the king. You and I, grandsons of the Goix through our mothers, are not we as good as any lord?"

These words were so alarming to the jeweller and the two women that they were followed by a dead silence. The ferments of 1789 were already tingling in the veins of Lecamus, who was not yet so old but what he could live to see the bold burghers of the Ligue.

"Are you selling well in spite of these troubles?" said Lallier to Mademoiselle Lecamus.

"Troubles always do harm," she replied.

“That’s one reason why I am so set on making my son a lawyer,” said Lecamus; “for squabbles and law go on forever.”

The conversation then turned to commonplace topics, to the great satisfaction of the jeweller, who was not fond of either political troubles or audacity of thought.

III.

THE CHÂTEAU DE BLOIS.

THE banks of the Loire, from Blois to Angers, were the favorite resort of the last two branches of the royal race which occupied the throne before the house of Bourbon. That beautiful valley plain so well deserves the honor bestowed upon it by kings that we must here repeat what was said of it by one of our most eloquent writers : —

“ There is one province in France which is never sufficiently admired. Fragrant as Italy, flowery as the banks of the Guadalquivir, beautiful especially in its own characteristics, wholly French, having always been French, — unlike in that respect to our northern provinces, which have degenerated by contact with Germany, and to our southern provinces, which have lived in concubinage with Moors, Spaniards, and all other nationalities that adjoined them. This pure, chaste, brave, and loyal province is Touraine. Historic France is there ! Auvergne is Auvergne, Languedoc is only Languedoc ; but Touraine is France ; the most national river for Frenchmen is the Loire, which waters Touraine. For this reason we ought not to be surprised at the great number of historically noble buildings possessed by those departments which have taken the name, or derivations of the name, of the Loire. At every step we take in this land of enchantment we discover a new picture, bordered, it may be, by a river, or a tranquil lake reflecting in its liquid depths a castle with towers, and woods and sparkling waterfalls.

It is quite natural that in a region chosen by Royalty for its sojourn, where the court was long established, great families and fortunes and distinguished men should have settled and built palaces as grand as themselves."

But is it not incomprehensible that Royalty did not follow the advice indirectly given by Louis XI. to place the capital of the kingdom at Tours? There, without great expense, the Loire might have been made accessible for the merchant service, and also for vessels-of-war of light draught. There, too, the seat of government would have been safe from the dangers of invasion. Had this been done, the northern cities would not have required such vast sums of money spent to fortify them, — sums as vast as were those expended on the sumptuous glories of Versailles. If Louis XIV. had listened to Vauban, who wished to build his great palace at Mont Louis, between the Loire and the Cher, perhaps the revolution of 1789 might never have taken place.

These beautiful shores still bear the marks of royal tenderness. The châteaux of Chambord, Amboise, Blois, Chenonceaux, Chaumont, Plessis-les-Tours, all those which the mistresses of kings, financiers, and nobles built at Vézetz, Azay-le-Rideau, Ussé, Villandri, Valençay, Chanteloup, Durétal, some of which have disappeared, though most of them still remain, are admirable relics which remind us of the marvels of a period that is little understood by the literary sect of the Middle-agists.

Among all these châteaux, that of Blois, where the court was then staying, is one on which the magnificence of the houses of Orléans and of Valois has placed

its brilliant sign-manual, — making it the most interesting of all for historians, archaeologists, and Catholics. It was at the time of which we write completely isolated. The town, inclosed by massive walls supported by towers, lay below the fortress, — for the château served, in fact, as fort and pleasure-house. Above the town, with its blue-tiled, crowded roofs extending then, as now, from the river to the crest of the hill which commands the right bank, lies a triangular plateau, bounded to the west by a streamlet, which in these days is of no importance, for it flows beneath the town; but in the fifteenth century, so say historians, it formed quite a deep ravine, of which there still remains a sunken road, almost an abyss, between the suburbs of the town and the château.

It was on this plateau, with a double exposure to the north and south, that the counts of Blois built, in the architecture of the twelfth century, a castle where the famous Thibault le Tricheur, Thibault le Vieux, and others held a celebrated court. In those days of pure feudality, in which the king was merely *primus inter pares* (to use the fine expression of a king of Poland), the counts of Champagne, the counts of Blois, those of Anjou, the simple barons of Normandie, the dukes of Bretagne, lived with the splendor of sovereign princes and gave kings to the proudest kingdoms. The Plantagenets of Anjou, the Lusignans of Poitou, the Roberts of Normandie, maintained with a bold hand the royal races, and sometimes simple knights like du Glaicquin refused the purple, preferring the sword of a connétable.

When the Crown annexed the county of Blois to its

domain, Louis XII., who had a liking for this residence (perhaps to escape Plessis of sinister memory), built at the back of the first building another building, facing east and west, which connected the château of the counts of Blois with the rest of the old structures, of which nothing now remains but the vast hall in which the States-general were held under Henri III.

Before he became enamoured of Chambord, François I. wished to complete the château of Blois by adding two other wings, which would have made the structure a perfect square. But Chambord weaned him from Blois, where he built only one wing, which in his time and that of his grandchildren was the only inhabited part of the château. This third building erected by François I. is more vast and far more decorated than the Louvre, the château of Henri II. It is in the style of architecture now called Renaissance, and presents the most fantastic features of that style. Therefore, at a period when a strict and jealous architecture ruled construction, when the Middle Ages were not even considered, at a time when literature was not as clearly wedded to art as it is now, La Fontaine said of the château de Blois, in his hearty, good-humored way: "The part that François I. built, if looked at from the outside, pleased me better than all the rest; there I saw numbers of little galleries, little windows, little balconies, little ornamentations without order or regularity, and they make up a grand whole which I like."

The château of Blois had, therefore, the merit of representing three orders of architecture, three epochs, three systems, three dominions. Perhaps there is no other royal residence that can compare with it in that

respect. This immense structure presents to the eye in one inclosure, round one courtyard, a complete and perfect image of that grand presentation of the manners and customs and life of nations which is called Architecture. At the moment when Christophe was to visit the court, that part of the adjacent land which in our day is covered by a fourth palace, built seventy years later (by Gaston, the rebellious brother of Louis XIII., then exiled to Blois), was an open space containing pleasure-grounds and hanging gardens, picturesquely placed among the battlements and unfinished turrets of François I.'s château.

These gardens communicated, by a bridge of a fine, bold construction (which the old men of Blois may still remember to have seen demolished) with a pleasure-ground on the other side of the château, which, by the lay of the land, was on the same level. The nobles attached to the Court of Anne de Bretagne, or those of that province who came to solicit favors, or to confer with the queen as to the fate and condition of Brittany, awaited in this pleasure-ground the opportunity for an audience, either at the queen's rising, or at her coming out to walk. Consequently, history has given the name of "*Perchoir aux Bretons*" to this piece of ground, which, in our day, is the fruit-garden of a worthy bourgeois, and forms a projection into the place Des Jésuites. The latter place was included in the gardens of this beautiful royal residence, which had, as we have said, its upper and its lower gardens. Not far from the place des Jésuites may still be seen a pavilion built by Catherine de' Medici, where, according to the historians of Blois, warm mineral baths were

placed for her use. This detail enables us to trace the very irregular disposition of the gardens, which went up or down according to the undulations of the ground, becoming extremely intricate around the château, — a fact which helped to give it strength, and caused, as we shall see, the discomfiture of the Duc de Guise.

The gardens were reached from the château through external and internal galleries, the most important of which was called the “Galerie des Cerfs” on account of its decoration. This gallery led to the magnificent staircase which, no doubt, inspired the famous double staircase of Chambord. It led, from floor to floor, to all the apartments of the castle.

Though La Fontaine preferred the château of François I. to that of Louis XII., perhaps the naïveté of that of the good king will give true artists more pleasure, while at the same time they admire the magnificent structure of the knightly king. The elegance of the two staircases which are placed at each end of the château of Louis XII., the delicate carving and sculpture, so original in design, which abound everywhere, the remains of which, though time has done its worst, still charm the antiquary, all, even to the semi-cloistral distribution of the apartments, reveals a great simplicity of manners. Evidently, the *court* did not yet exist; it had not developed, as it did under François I. and Catherine de' Medici, to the great detriment of feudal customs. As we admire the galleries, or most of them, the capitals of the columns, and certain figurines of exquisite delicacy, it is impossible not to imagine that Michel Columb, that great sculptor, the Michel-Angelo of Brittany, passed that way for the

pleasure of Queen Anne, whom he afterwards immortalized on the tomb of her father, the last duke of Brittany.

Whatever La Fontaine may choose to say about the "little galleries" and the "little ornamentations," nothing can be more grandiose than the dwelling of the splendid François. Thanks to I know not what indifference, to forgetfulness perhaps, the apartments occupied by Catherine de' Medici and her son François II. present to us to-day the leading features of that time. The historian can there restore the tragic scenes of the drama of the Reformation, — a drama in which the dual struggle of the Guises and of the Bourbons against the Valois was a series of most complicated acts, the plot of which was here unravelled.

The château of François I. completely crushes the artless habitation of Louis XII. by its imposing masses. On the side of the gardens, that is, toward the modern place des Jésuites, the castle presents an elevation nearly double that which it shows on the side of the courtyard. The ground-floor on this side forms the second floor on the side of the gardens, where are placed the celebrated galleries. Thus the first floor above the ground-floor toward the courtyard (where Queen Catherine was lodged) is the third floor on the garden side, and the king's apartments were four storeys above the garden, which at the time of which we write was separated from the base of the castle by a deep moat. The château, already colossal as viewed from the courtyard, appears gigantic when seen from below, as La Fontaine saw it. He mentions particularly that he did not enter either the courtyard or the

apartments, and it is to be remarked that from the place des Jésuites all the details seem small. The balconies on which the courtiers promenaded; the galleries, marvellously executed; the sculptured windows, whose embrasures are so deep as to form boudoirs — for which indeed they served — resemble at that great height the fantastic decorations which scene-painters give to a fairy palace at the opera.

But in the courtyard, although the three storeys above the ground-floor rise as high as the clock-tower of the Tuileries, the infinite delicacy of the architecture reveals itself to the rapture of our astonished eyes. This wing of the great building, in which the two queens, Catherine de' Medici and Mary Stuart, held their sumptuous court, is divided in the centre by a hexagon tower, in the empty well of which winds up a spiral staircase, — a Moorish caprice, designed by giants, made by dwarfs, which gives to this wonderful façade the effect of a dream. The baluster of this staircase forms a spiral connecting itself by a square landing to five of the six sides of the tower, requiring at each landing transversal corbels which are decorated with arabesque carvings without and within. This bewildering creation of ingenious and delicate details, of marvels which give speech to stones, can be compared only to the deeply worked and crowded carving of the Chinese ivories. Stone is made to look like lace-work. The flowers, the figures of men and animals clinging to the structure of the stairway, are multiplied, step by step, until they crown the tower with a key-stone on which the chisels of the art of the sixteenth century have contended against the naïve cutters of images who

fifty years earlier had carved the key-stones of Louis XII.'s two stairways.

However dazzled we may be by these recurring forms of indefatigable labor, we cannot fail to see that money was lacking to François I. for Blois, as it was to Louis XIV. for Versailles. More than one figurine lifts its delicate head from a block of rough stone behind it; more than one fantastic flower is merely indicated by chiselled touches on the abandoned stone, though dampness has since laid its blossoms of mouldy greenery upon it. On the façade, side by side with the tracery of one window, another window presents its masses of jagged stone carved only by the hand of time. Here, to the least artistic and the least trained eye, is a ravishing contrast between this frontage, where marvels throng, and the interior frontage of the château of Louis XII., which is composed of a ground-floor of arcades of fairy lightness supported by tiny columns resting at their base on a graceful platform, and of two storeys above it, the windows of which are carved with delightful sobriety. Beneath the arcade is a gallery, the walls of which are painted in fresco, the ceiling also being painted; traces can still be found of this magnificence, derived from Italy, and testifying to the expeditions of our kings, to which the principality of Milan then belonged.

Opposite to François I.'s wing was the chapel of the counts of Blois, the façade of which is almost in harmony with the architecture of the later dwelling of Louis XII. No words can picture the majestic solidity of these three distinct masses of building. In spite of their nonconformity of style, Royalty, powerful and firm,

demonstrating its dangers by the greatness of its precautions, was a bond, uniting these three edifices, so different in character, two of which rested against the vast hall of the States-general, towering high like a church.

Certainly, neither the simplicity nor the strength of the burgher existence (which were depicted at the beginning of this history) in which Art was always represented, were lacking to this royal habitation. Blois was the fruitful and brilliant example to which the Bourgeoisie and Feudality, Wealth and Nobility, gave such splendid replies in the towns and in the rural regions. Imagination could not desire any other sort of dwelling for the prince who reigned over France in the sixteenth century. The richness of seignorial garments, the luxury of female adornment, must have harmonized delightfully with the lace-work of these stones so wonderfully manipulated. From floor to floor, as the king of France went up the marvellous staircase of his château of Blois, he could see the broad expanse of the beautiful Loire, which brought him news of all his kingdom as it lay on either side of the great river, two halves of a State facing each other, and semi-rivals. If, instead of building Chambord in a barren, gloomy plain two leagues away, François I. had placed it where, seventy years later, Gaston built his palace, Versailles would never have existed, and Blois would have become, necessarily, the capital of France.

Four Valois and Catherine de' Medici lavished their wealth on the wing built by François I. at Blois. Who can look at those massive partition-walls, the spinal column of the castle, in which are sunken deep alcoves, secret staircases, cabinets, while they themselves inclose

halls as vast as that great council-room, the guardroom, and the royal chambers, in which, in our day, a regiment of infantry is comfortably lodged — who can look at all this and not be aware of the prodigalities of Crown and court? Even if a visitor does not at once understand how the splendor within must have corresponded with the splendor without, the remaining vestiges of Catherine de' Medici's cabinet, where Christophe was about to be introduced, would bear sufficient testimony to the elegances of Art which peopled these apartments with animated designs in which salamanders sparkled among the wreaths, and the palette of the sixteenth century illumined the darkest corners with its brilliant coloring. In this cabinet an observer will still find traces of that taste for gilding which Catherine brought with her from Italy; for the princesses of her house loved, in the words of the author already quoted, to veneer the castles of France with the gold earned by their ancestors in commerce, and to hang out their wealth on the walls of their apartments.

The queen-mother occupied on the first upper floor the apartments of Queen Claude of France, wife of François I., in which may still be seen, delicately carved, the double C accompanied by figures, purely white, of swans and lilies, signifying *candidior candidis* — more white than the whitest — the motto of the queen whose name began, like that of Catherine, with a C, and which applied as well to the daughter of Louis XII. as to the mother of the last Valois; for no suspicion, in spite of the violence of Calvinist calumny, has tarnished the fidelity of Catherine de' Medici to Henri II.

The queen-mother, still charged with the care of two young children (him who was afterward Duc d'Alençon, and Marguerite, the wife of Henri IV., the sister whom Charles IX. called Margot), had need of the whole of this first upper floor.

The king, François II., and the queen, Mary Stuart, occupied, on the second floor, the royal apartments which had formerly been those of François I. and were, subsequently, those of Henri III. This floor, like that taken by the queen-mother, is divided in two parts throughout its whole length by the famous partition-wall, which is more than four feet thick, against which rests the enormous walls which separate the rooms from each other. Thus, on both floors, the apartments are in two distinct halves. One half, to the south, looking to the courtyard, served for public receptions and for the transaction of business ; whereas the private apartments were placed, partly to escape the heat, to the north, overlooking the gardens, on which side is the splendid façade with its balconies and galleries looking out upon the open country of the Vendômois, and down upon the " Perchoir des Bretons " and the moat, the only side of which La Fontaine speaks.

The château of François I. was, in those days, terminated by an enormous unfinished tower which was intended to mark the colossal angle of the building when the succeeding wing was built. Later, Gaston took down one side of it, in order to build his palace on to it ; but he never finished the work, and the tower remained in ruins. This royal stronghold served as a prison or dungeon, according to popular tradition.

As we wander to-day through the halls of this match-

less château, so precious to art and to history, what poet would not be haunted by regrets, and grieved for France, at seeing the arabesques of Catherine's boudoir *whitewashed* and almost obliterated, by order of the quartermaster of the barracks (this royal residence is now a barrack) at the time of an outbreak of cholera. The panels of Catherine's boudoir, a room of which we are about to speak, is the last remaining relic of the rich decorations accumulated by five artistic kings. Making our way through the labyrinth of chambers, halls, stairways, towers, we may say to ourselves with solemn certitude: "Here Mary Stuart cajoled her husband on behalf of the Guises." "There, the Guises insulted Catherine." "Later, at that very spot the second Balafré fell beneath the daggers of the avengers of the Crown." "A century earlier, from this very window, Louis XII. made signs to his friend Cardinal d'Amboise to come to him." "Here, on this balcony, d'Épernon, the accomplice of Ravillac, met Marie de' Medici, who knew, it was said, of the proposed regicide, and allowed it to be committed."

In the chapel, where the marriage of Henri IV. and Marguerite de Valois took place, the sole remaining fragment of the château of the counts of Blois, a regiment now makes its shoes. This wonderful structure, in which so many styles may still be seen, so many great deeds have been performed, is in a state of dilapidation which disgraces France. What grief for those who love the great historic monuments of our country to know that soon those eloquent stones will be lost to sight and knowledge, like others at the corner of the rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie; possibly, they will exist nowhere but in these pages.

It is necessary to remark that, in order to watch the royal court more closely, the Guises, although they had a house of their own in the town, which still exists, had obtained permission to occupy the upper floor above the apartments of Louis XII., the same lodgings afterwards occupied by the Duchesse de Nemours under the roof.

The young king, François II., and his bride Mary Stuart, in love with each other like the girl and boy of sixteen which they were, had been abruptly transferred, in the depth of winter, from the château de Saint-Germain, which the Duc de Guise thought liable to attack, to the fortress which the château of Blois then was, being isolated and protected on three sides by precipices, and admirably defended as to its entrance. The Guises, uncles of Mary Stuart, had powerful reasons for not residing in Paris and for keeping the king and court in a castle the whole exterior surroundings of which could easily be watched and defended. A struggle was now beginning around the throne, between the house of Lorraine and the house of Valois, which was destined to end in this very château, twenty-eight years later, namely in 1588, when Henri III., under the very eyes of his mother, at that moment deeply humiliated by the Lorrains, heard fall upon the floor of his own cabinet, the head of the boldest of all the Guises, the second Balafre, son of that first Balafre by whom Catherine de' Medici was now being tricked, watched, threatened, and virtually imprisoned.

IV.

THE QUEEN-MOTHER.

THIS noble château of Blois was to Catherine de' Medici the narrowest of prisons. On the death of her husband, who had always held her in subjection, she expected to reign ; but, on the contrary, she found herself crushed under the thralldom of strangers, whose polished manners were far more really brutal than those of jailers. No action of hers could be done secretly. The women who attended her either had lovers among the Guises or were watched by Argus eyes. These were times when passions notably exhibited the strange effects produced in all ages by the strong antagonism of two powerful conflicting interests in the State. Gallantry, which served Catherine so well, was also an auxiliary of the Guises. The Prince de Condé, the first leader of the Reformation, was a lover of the Maréchale de Saint-André, whose husband was the tool of the Grand Master. The cardinal, convinced by the affair of the Vidame de Chartres, that Catherine was more unconquered than invulnerable as to love, was paying court to her. The play of all these passions strangely complicated those of politics, — making, as it were, a double game of chess, in which both parties had to watch the head and heart of their opponent, in order

to know, when a crisis came, whether the one would betray the other.

Though she was constantly in presence of the Cardinal de Lorraine or of Duc François de Guise, who both distrusted her, the closest and ablest enemy of Catherine de' Medici was her daughter-in-law, Queen Mary, a fair little creature, malicious as a waiting-maid, proud as a Stuart wearing three crowns, learned as an old pedant, giddy as a school-girl, as much in love with her husband as a courtesan is with her lover, devoted to her uncles whom she admired, and delighted to see the king share (at her instigation) the regard she had for them. A mother-in-law is always a person whom the daughter-in-law is inclined not to like; especially when she wears the crown and wishes to retain it, which Catherine had imprudently made but too well known. Her former position, when Diane de Poitiers had ruled Henri II., was more tolerable than this; then at least she received the external honors that were due to a queen, and the homage of the court. But now the duke and the cardinal, who had none but their own minions about them, seemed to take pleasure in abasing her. Catherine, hemmed in on all sides by their courtiers, received, not only day by day but from hour to hour, terrible blows to her pride and her self-love; for the Guises were determined to treat her on the same system of repression which the late king, her husband, had so long pursued.

The thirty-six years of anguish which were now about to desolate France may, perhaps, be said to have begun by the scene in which the son of the furrier of the two queens was sent on the perilous errand which makes

him the chief figure of our present Study. The danger into which this zealous Reformer was about to fall became imminent the very morning on which he started from the port of Beaugency for the château de Blois, bearing precious documents which compromised the highest heads of the nobility, placed in his hands by that wily partisan, the indefatigable La Renaudie, who met him, as agreed upon, at Beaugency, having reached that port before him.

While the tow-boat in which Christophe now embarked floated, impelled by a light east wind, down the river Loire the famous cardinal Charles de Lorraine, and his brother the second Duc de Guise, one of the greatest warriors of those days, were contemplating, like eagles perched on a rocky summit, their present situation, and looking prudently about them before striking the great blow by which they intended to kill the Reform in France at Amboise, — an attempt renewed twelve years later in Paris, August 24, 1572, on the feast of Saint-Bartholomew.

During the night three *seigneurs*, who each played a great part in the twelve years' drama which followed this double plot now laid by the Guises and also by the Reformers, had arrived at Blois from different directions, each riding at full speed, and leaving their horses half-dead at the postern-gate of the château, which was guarded by captains and soldiers absolutely devoted to the Duc de Guise, the idol of all warriors.

One word about that great man, — a word that must tell, in the first instance, whence his fortunes took their rise.

His mother was Antoinette de Bourbon, great-aunt

of Henri IV. Of what avail is consanguinity? He was, at this moment, aiming at the head of his cousin the Prince de Condé. His niece was Mary Stuart. His wife was Anne, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara. The Grand Connétable de Montmorency called the Duc de Guise "Monseigneur" as he would the king, — ending his letter with "Your very humble servant." Guise, Grand Master of the king's household, replied "Monsieur le connétable," and signed, as he did for the Parliament, "Your very good friend."

As for the cardinal, called the transalpine pope, and his Holiness, by Estienne, he had the whole monastic Church of France on his side, and treated the Holy Father as an equal. Vain of his eloquence, and one of the greatest theologians of his time, he kept incessant watch over France and Italy by means of three religious orders who were absolutely devoted to him, toiling day and night in his service and serving him as spies and counsellors.

These few words will explain to what heights of power the duke and the cardinal had attained. In spite of their wealth and the enormous revenues of their several offices, they were so personally disinterested, so eagerly carried away on the current of their statesmanship, and so generous at heart, that they were always in debt, doubtless after the manner of Cæsar. When Henri III. caused the death of the second Balafré, whose life was a menace to him, the house of Guise was necessarily ruined. The costs of endeavoring to seize the crown during a whole century will explain the lowered position of this great house during the reigns of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., when the sudden death

of MADAME told all Europe the infamous part which a Chevalier de Lorraine had debased himself to play.

Calling themselves the heirs of the dispossessed Carolingians, the duke and cardinal acted with the utmost insolence toward Catherine de' Medici, the mother-in-law of their niece. The Duchesse de Guise spared her no mortification. This duchess was a d'Este, and Catherine was a Medici, the daughter of upstart Florentine merchants, whom the sovereigns of Europe had never yet admitted into their royal fraternity. François I. himself had always considered his son's marriage with a Medici as a *mésalliance*, and only consented to it under the expectation that his second son would never be dauphin. Hence his fury when his eldest son was poisoned by the Florentine Montecuculi. The d'Estes refused to recognize the Medici as Italian princes. Those former merchants were in fact trying to solve the impossible problem of maintaining a throne in the midst of republican institutions. The title of grand-duke was only granted very tardily by Philip the Second, king of Spain, to reward those Medici who bought it by betraying France their benefactress, and servilely attaching themselves to the court of Spain, which was at the very time covertly counteracting them in Italy.

"Flatter none but your enemies," the famous saying of Catherine de' Medici, seems to have been the political rule of life with that family of merchant princes, in which great men were never lacking until their destinies became great, when they fell, before their time, into that degeneracy in which royal races and noble families are wont to end.

For three generations there had been a great Lorrain warrior and a great Lorrain churchman; and, what is more singular, the churchmen all bore a strong resemblance in the face to Ximenes, as did Cardinal Richelieu in after days. These five great cardinals all had sly, mean, and yet terrible faces; while the warriors, on the other hand, were of that type of Basque mountaineer which we see in Henri IV. The two Balafrés, father and son, wounded and scarred in the same manner, lost something of this type, but not the grace and affability by which, as much as by their bravery, they won the hearts of the soldiery.

It is not useless to relate how the present Grand Master received his wound; for it was healed by the heroic measures of a personage of our drama, — by Ambroise Paré, the man we have already mentioned as under obligations to Lecamus, syndic of the guild of furriers. At the siege of Calais the duke had his face pierced through and through by a lance, the point of which, after entering the cheek just below the right eye, went through to the neck, below the left eye, and remained, broken off, in the face. The duke lay dying in his tent in the midst of universal distress, and he would have died had it not been for the devotion and prompt courage of Ambroise Paré. “The duke is not dead, gentlemen,” he said to the weeping attendants, “but he soon will die if I dare not treat him as I would a dead man; and I shall risk doing so, no matter what it may cost me in the end. See!” And with that he put his left foot on the duke’s breast, took the broken wooden end of the lance in his fingers, shook and loosened it by degrees in the wound, and then

succeeded in drawing out the iron head, as if he were handling a thing and not a man. Though he saved the prince by this heroic treatment, he could not prevent the horrible scar which gave the great soldier his nickname, — *Le Balafré*, the Scarred. This name descended to the son, and for a similar reason.

Absolutely masters of François II., whom his wife ruled through their mutual and excessive passion, these two great Lorrain princes, the duke and the cardinal, were masters of France, and had no other enemy at court than Catherine de' Medici. No great statesmen ever played a closer or more watchful game.

The mutual position of the ambitious widow of Henri II. and the ambitious house of Lorraine was pictured, as it were, to the eye by a scene which took place on the terrace of the *château de Blois* very early in the morning of the day on which *Christophe Lecamus* was destined to arrive there. The queen-mother, who feigned an extreme attachment to the Guises, had asked to be informed of the news brought by the three *seigneurs* coming from three different parts of the kingdom; but she had the mortification of being courteously dismissed by the cardinal. She then walked to the *parterres* which overhung the *Loire*, where she was building, under the superintendence of her *astrologer*, *Ruggieri*, an observatory, which is still standing, and from which the eye may range over the whole landscape of that delightful valley. The two Lorrain princes were at the other end of the terrace, facing the *Vendômois*, which overlooks the upper part of the town, the perch of the *Bretons*, and the postern gate of the *château*.

Catherine had deceived the two brothers by pretending to a slight displeasure; for she was in reality very well pleased to have an opportunity to speak to one of the three men who had arrived in such haste. This was a young nobleman named Chiverni, apparently a tool of the cardinal, in reality a devoted servant of Catherine. Catherine also counted among her devoted servants two Florentine nobles, the Gondi; but they were so suspected by the Guises that she dared not send them on any errand away from the court, where she kept them, watched, it is true, in all their words and actions, but where at least they were able to watch and study the Guises and counsel Catherine. These two Florentines maintained in the interests of the queen-mother another Italian, Birago, — a clever Piedmontese, who pretended, with Chiverni, to have abandoned their mistress and gone over to the Guises, who encouraged their enterprises and employed them to watch Catherine.

Chiverni had come from Paris and Écouen. The last to arrive was Saint-André, who was marshal of France and became so important that the Guises, whose creature he was, made him the third person in the triumvirate they formed the following year against Catherine. The other *seigneur* who had arrived during the night was Vieilleville, also a creature of the Guises and a marshal of France, who was returning from a secret mission known only to the Grand Master, who had entrusted it to him. As for Saint-André, he was in charge of military measures taken with the object of driving all Reformers under arms into Amboise: a scheme which now formed the subject of a council

held by the duke and cardinal, Birago, Chiverni, Vieilleville, and Saint-André. As the two Lorrains employed Birago, it is to be supposed that they relied upon their own powers; for they knew of his attachment to the queen-mother. At this singular epoch the double part played by many of the political men of the day was well known to both parties; they were like cards in the hands of gamblers, — the cleverest player won the game. During this council the two brothers maintained the most impenetrable reserve. A conversation which now took place between Catherine and certain of her friends will explain the object of this council, held by the Guises in the open air, in the hanging gardens, at break of day, as if they feared to speak within the walls of the château de Blois.

The queen-mother, under pretence of examining the observatory then in process of construction, walked in that direction accompanied by the two Gondis, glancing with a suspicious and inquisitive eye at the group of enemies who were still standing at the farther end of the terrace, and from whom Chiverni now detached himself to join the queen-mother. She was then at the corner of the terrace which looks down upon the Church of Saint-Nicholas; there, at least, there could be no danger of the slightest overhearing. The wall of the terrace is on a level with the towers of the church, and the Guises invariably held their council at the farther corner of the same terrace at the base of the great unfinished keep or dungeon, — going and returning between the Perchoir des Bretons and the gallery by the bridge which joined them to the gardens. No one was within sight. Chiverni raised the hand of the queen-

mother to kiss it, and as he did so he slipped a little note from his hand to hers, without being observed by the two Italians. Catherine turned to the angle of the parapet and read as follows : —

You are powerful enough to hold the balance between the leaders and to force them into a struggle as to who shall serve you ; your house is full of kings, and you have nothing to fear from the Lorrains or the Bourbons provided you pit them one against the other, for both are striving to snatch the crown from your children. Be the mistress and not the servant of your counsellors ; support them, in turn, one against the other, or the kingdom will go from bad to worse, and mighty wars may come of it.

L'HÔPITAL.

The queen put the letter in the hollow of her corset, resolving to burn it as soon as she was alone.

“ When did you see him ? ” she asked Chiverni.

“ On my way back from visiting the Connétable, at Melun, where I met him with the Duchesse de Berry, whom he was most impatient to convey to Savoie, that he might return here and open the eyes of the chancellor Olivier, who is now completely duped by the Lorrains. As soon as Monsieur l'Hôpital saw the true object of the Guises he determined to support your interests. That is why he is so anxious to get here and give you his vote at the councils.”

“ Is he sincere ? ” asked Catherine. “ You know very well that if the Lorrains have put him in the council it is that he may help them to reign.”

“ L'Hôpital is a Frenchman who comes of too good a stock not to be honest and sincere,” said Chiverni ; “ Besides, his note is a sufficiently strong pledge.”

"What answer did the Connétable send to the Guises?"

"He replied that he was the servant of the king and would await his orders. On receiving that answer the cardinal, to suppress all resistance, determined to propose the appointment of his brother as lieutenant-general of the kingdom.

"Have they got as far as that?" exclaimed Catherine, alarmed. "Well, did Monsieur l'Hôpital send me no other message?"

"He told me to say to you, madame, that you alone could stand between the Crown and the Guises."

"Does he think that I ought to use the Huguenots as a weapon?"

"Ah! madame," cried Chiverni, surprised at such astuteness, "we never dreamed of casting you into such difficulties."

"Does he know the position that I am in?" asked the queen, calmly.

"Very nearly. He thinks you were duped after the death of the king into accepting that castle on Madame Diane's overthrow. The Guises consider themselves released toward the queen by having satisfied the woman."

"Yes," said the queen, looking at the two Gondi, "I made a blunder."

"A blunder of the gods," replied Charles de Gondi.

"Gentlemen," said Catherine, "if I go over openly to the Reformers I shall become the slave of a party."

"Madame," said Chiverni, eagerly, "I approve entirely of your meaning. You must use them, but not serve them."

"Though your support does, undoubtedly, for the time being lie there," said Charles de Gondi, "we must not conceal from ourselves that success and defeat are both equally perilous."

"I know it," said the queen; "a single false step would be a pretext on which the Guises would seize at once to get rid of me."

"The niece of a pope, the mother of four Valois, a queen of France, the widow of the most ardent persecutor of the Huguenots, an Italian Catholic, the aunt of Leo X., — can *she* ally herself with the Reformation?" asked Charles de Gondi.

"But," said his brother Albert, "if she seconds the Guises does she not play into the hands of a usurpation? We have to do with men who see a crown to seize in the coming struggle between Catholicism and Reform. It is possible to support the Reformers without abjuring."

"Reflect, madame, that your family, which ought to have been wholly devoted to the king of France, is at this moment the servant of the king of Spain; and to-morrow it will be that of the Reformation if the Reformation could make a king of the Duke of Florence."

"I am certainly disposed to lend a hand, for a time, to the Huguenots," said Catherine, "if only to revenge myself on that soldier and that priest and that woman!" As she spoke, she called attention with her subtile Italian glance to the duke and cardinal, and then to the second floor of the château on which were the apartments of her son and Mary Stuart. "That trio has taken from my hands the reins of State, for which I

waited long while the old woman filled my place," she said gloomily, glancing toward Chenonceaux, the château she had lately exchanged with Diane de Poitiers against that of Chaumont. "*Ma*," she added in Italian, "it seems that these reforming gentry in Geneva have not the wit to address themselves to me; and, on my conscience, I cannot go to them. Not one of you would dare to risk carrying them a message!" She stamped her foot. "I did hope you would have met the cripple at Écouen — *he* has sense," she said to Chiverni.

"The Prince de Condé was there, madame," said Chiverni, "but he could not persuade the Connétable to join him. Monsieur de Montmorency wants to overthrow the Guises, who have sent him into exile, but he will not encourage heresy."

"What will ever break these individual wills which are forever thwarting royalty? God's truth!" exclaimed the queen, "the great nobles must be made to destroy each other, as Louis XI., the greatest of your kings, did with those of his time. There are four or five parties now in this kingdom, and the weakest of them is that of my children."

"The Reformation is an *idea*," said Charles de Gondi; "the parties that Louis XI. crushed were moved by self-interests only."

"Ideas are behind selfish interests," replied Chiverni. "Under Louis XI. the idea was the great Fiefs —"

"Make heresy an axe," said Albert de Gondi, "and you will escape the odium of executions."

"Ah!" cried the queen, "but I am ignorant of the

strength and also of the plans of the Reformers ; and I have no safe way of communicating with them. If I were detected in any manœuvre of that kind, either by the queen, who watches me like an infant in a cradle, or by those two jailers over there, I should be banished from France and sent back to Florence with a terrible escort, commanded by Guise minions. Thank you, no, my daughter-in-law ! — but I wish *you* the fate of being a prisoner in your own home, that you may know what you have made me suffer.”

“ Their plans ! ” exclaimed Chiverni ; “ the duke and the cardinal know what they are, but those two foxes will not divulge them. If you could induce them to do so, madame, I would sacrifice myself for your sake and come to an understanding with the Prince de Condé.”

“ How much of the Guises’ own plans have they been forced to reveal to you ? ” asked the queen, with a glance at the two brothers.

“ Monsieur de Vieilleville and Monsieur de Saint André have just received fresh orders, the nature of which is concealed from us ; but I think the duke is intending to concentrate his best troops on the left bank. Within a few days you will all be moved to Amboise. The duke has been studying the position from this terrace and decides that Blois is not a propitious spot for his secret schemes. What can he want better ? ” added Chiverni, pointing to the precipices which surrounded the château. “ There is no place in the world where the court is more secure from attack than it is here.”

“ Abdicate or reign,” said Albert in a low voice to the queen, who stood motionless and thoughtful.

A terrible expression of inward rage passed over the fine ivory face of Catherine de' Medici, who was not yet forty years old, though she had lived for twenty-six years at the court of France, — without power, she, who from the moment of her arrival intended to play a leading part! Then, in her native language, the language of Dante, these terrible words came slowly from her lips: —

“Nothing so long as that son lives! — His little wife bewitches him,” she added after a pause.

Catherine's exclamation was inspired by a prophecy which had been made to her a few days earlier at the château de Chaumont on the opposite bank of the river; where she had been taken by Ruggieri, her astrologer, to obtain information as to the lives of her four children from a celebrated female seer, secretly brought there by Nostradamus (chief among the physicians of that great sixteenth century) who practised, like the Ruggieri, the Cardans, Paracelsus, and others, the occult sciences. This woman, whose name and life have eluded history, foretold one year as the length of François's reign.

“Give me your opinion on all this,” said Catherine to Chiverni.

“We shall have a battle,” replied the prudent courtier. “The king of Navarre — ”

“Oh! say the queen,” interrupted Catherine.

“True, the queen,” said Chiverni, smiling, “the queen has given the Prince de Condé as leader to the Reformers, and he, in his position of younger son, can venture all; consequently the cardinal talks of ordering him here.”

“If he comes,” cried the queen, “I am saved!”

Thus the leaders of the great movement of the Reformation in France were justified in hoping for an ally in Catherine de' Medici.

"There is one thing to be considered," said the queen. "The Bourbons may fool the Huguenots and the Sieurs Calvin and de Bèze may fool the Bourbons, but are we strong enough to fool Huguenots, Bourbons, and Guises? In presence of three such enemies it is allowable to feel one's pulse."

"But they have not the king," said Albert de Gondi. "You will always triumph, having the king on your side."

"*Maladetta Maria!*" muttered Catherine between her teeth.

"The Lorrains are, even now, endeavoring to turn the burghers against you," remarked Birago."

V.

THE COURT.

THE hope of gaining the crown was not the result of a premeditated plan in the minds of the restless Guises. Nothing warranted such a hope or such a plan. Circumstances alone inspired their audacity. The two cardinals and the two Balafrés were four ambitious minds, superior in talents to all the other politicians who surrounded them. This family was never really brought low except by Henri IV. ; a factionist himself, trained in the great school of which Catherine and the Guises were masters, — by whose lessons he had profited but too well.

At this moment the two brothers, the duke and cardinal, were the arbiters of the greatest revolution attempted in Europe since that of Henry VIII. in England, which was the direct consequence of the invention of printing. Adversaries to the Reformation, they meant to stifle it, power being in their hands. But their opponent, Calvin, though less famous than Luther, was far the stronger of the two. Calvin saw government where Luther saw dogma only. While the stout beer-drinker and amorous German fought with the devil and flung an inkbottle at his head, the man from Picardy, a sickly celibate, made plans of campaign, directed battles, armed princes, and roused whole peoples by sowing republican doctrines in the hearts of the

burghers, — recouping his continual defeats in the field by fresh progress in the mind of the nations.

The Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise, like Philip the Second and the Duke of Alba, knew where and when the monarchy was threatened, and how close the alliance ought to be between Catholicism and Royalty. Charles the Fifth, drunk with the wine of Charlemagne's cup, believing too blindly in the strength of his monarchy, and confident of sharing the world with Su-leiman, did not at first feel the blow at his head ; but no sooner had Cardinal Granvelle made him aware of the extent of the wound than he abdicated. The Guises had but one scheme, — that of annihilating heresy at a single blow. This blow they were now to attempt, for the first time, to strike at Amboise ; failing there they tried it again, twelve years later, at the Saint-Bartholomew, — on the latter occasion in conjunction with Catherine de' Medici, enlightened by that time by the flames of a twelve years' war, enlightened above all by the significant word “ republic,” uttered later and printed by the writers of the Reformation, but already foreseen (as we have said before) by Lecamus, that type of the Parisian bourgeoisie.

The two Guises, now on the point of striking a murderous blow at the heart of the French nobility, in order to separate it once for all from a religious party whose triumph would be its ruin, still stood together on the terrace, concerting as to the best means of revealing their coup-d'État to the king, while Catherine was talking with her counsellors.

“ Jeanne d'Albret knew what she was about when she declared herself protectress of the Huguenots ! She

has a battering-ram in the Reformation, and she knows how to use it," said the duke, who fathomed the deep designs of the Queen of Navarre, one of the great minds of the century.

"Théodore de Bèze is now at Nérac," remarked the cardinal, "after first going to Geneva to take Calvin's orders."

"What men these burghers know how to find!" exclaimed the duke.

"Ah! we have none on our side of the quality of La Renaudie!" cried the cardinal. "He is a true Catiline."

"Such men always act for their own interests," replied the duke. "Didn't I fathom La Renaudie? I loaded him with favors; I helped him to escape when he was condemned by the parliament of Bourgoigne; I brought him back from exile by obtaining a revision of his sentence; I intended to do far more for him; and all the while he was plotting a diabolical conspiracy against us! That rascal has united the Protestants of Germany with the heretics of France by reconciling the differences that grew up between the dogmas of Luther and those of Calvin. He has brought the discontented great seigneurs into the party of the Reformation without obliging them to abjure Catholicism openly. For the last year he has had thirty captains under him! He is everywhere at once, — at Lyon, in Languedoc, at Nantes! It was he who drew up those minutes of a consultation which were hawked about all Germany, in which the theologians declared that force might be resorted to in order to withdraw the king from our rule and tutelage; the paper is now

being circulated from town to town. Wherever we look for him we never find him ! And yet I have never done him anything but good ! It comes to this, that we must now either thrash him like a dog, or try to throw him a golden bridge by which he will cross into our camp."

" Bretagne, Languedoc, in fact the whole kingdom is in league to deal us a mortal blow," said the cardinal. " After the fête was over yesterday I spent the rest of the night in reading the reports sent me by the monks ; in which I found that the only persons who have compromised themselves are poor gentlemen, artisans, as to whom it does n't signify whether you hang them or let them live. The Colignys and Condés do not show their hand as yet, though they hold the threads of the whole conspiracy.

" Yes," replied the duke, " and, therefore, as soon as that lawyer Avenelles sold the secret of the plot, I told Braguelonne to let the conspirators carry it out. They have no suspicion that we know it ; they are so sure of surprising us that the leaders may possibly show themselves then. My advice is to allow ourselves to be beaten for forty-eight hours."

" Half an hour would be too much," cried the cardinal, alarmed.

" So this is your courage, is it ?" retorted the Balafgré.

The cardinal, quite unmoved, replied : " Whether the Prince de Condé is compromised or not, if we are certain that he is the leader, we should strike him down at once and secure tranquillity. We need judges rather than soldiers for this business — and judges are never lacking. Victory is always more certain in the parliament than on the field, and it costs less.

"I consent, willingly;" said the duke; "but do you think the Prince de Condé is powerful enough to inspire, himself alone, the audacity of those who are making this first attack upon us? Is n't there, behind him —"

"The king of Navarre," said the cardinal.

"Pooh! a fool who speaks to me cap in hand!" replied the duke. "The coquetries of that Florentine woman seem to blind your eyes —"

"Oh! as for that," exclaimed the priest, "if I do play the gallant with her it is only that I may read to the bottom of her heart."

"She has no heart," said the duke, sharply; "she is even more ambitious than you and I."

"You are a brave soldier," said the cardinal; "but, believe me, I distance you in this matter. I have had Catherine watched by Mary Stuart long before you even suspected her. She has no more religion than my shoe; if she is not the soul of this plot it is not for want of will. But we shall now be able to test her on the scene itself, and find out then how she stands by us. Up to this time, however, I am certain she has held no communication whatever with the heretics."

"Well, it is time now to reveal the whole plot to the king, and to the queen-mother, who, you say, knows nothing of it, — that is the sole proof of her innocence; perhaps the conspirators have waited till the last moment, expecting to dazzle her with the probabilities of success. La Renaudie must soon discover by my arrangements that we are warned. Last night Nemours was to follow detachments of the Reformers who are pouring in along the cross-roads, and the conspira-

tors will be forced to attack us at Amboise, which place I intend to let them enter. Here," added the duke, pointing to three sides of the rock on which the château de Blois is built; "we should have an assault without any result; the Huguenots could come and go at will. Blois is an open hall with four entrances; whereas Amboise is a sack with a single mouth."

"I shall not leave Catherine's side," said the cardinal.

"We have made a blunder," remarked the duke, who was playing with his dagger, tossing it in the air and catching it by the hilt. "We ought to have treated her as we did the Reformers, — given her complete freedom of action and caught her in the act."

The cardinal looked at his brother for an instant and shook his head.

"What does Pardaillan want?" said the duke, observing the approach of the young nobleman who was later to become celebrated by his encounter with La Renaudie, in which they both lost their lives.

"Monseigneur, a man sent by the queen's furrier is at the gate, and says he has an ermine suit to convey to her. Am I to let him enter?"

"Ah! yes, — the ermine surcoat she spoke of yesterday," returned the cardinal; "let the shop-fellow pass; she will want the garment for the voyage down the Loire."

"How did he get here without being stopped until he reached the gate?" asked the duke.

"I do not know," replied Pardaillan.

"I'll ask to see him when he is with the queen," thought the Balafre. "Let him wait in the *salle des gardes*," he said aloud. "Is he young, Pardaillan?"

“Yes, monseigneur ; he says he is a son of Lecamus the furrier.”

“Lecamus is a good Catholic,” remarked the cardinal, who, like his brother the duke, was endowed with Cæsar’s memory. “The rector of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bœufs relies upon him ; he is the provost of that quarter.”

“Nevertheless,” said the duke, “make the son talk with the captain of the Scotch guard,” laying an emphasis on the verb which was readily understood. “Ambroise is in the château ; he can tell us whether the fellow is really the son of Lecamus, for the old man did him good service in times past. Send for Ambroise Paré.”

It was at this moment that Queen Catherine went, unattended, toward the two brothers, who hastened to meet her with their accustomed show of respect, in which the Italian princess detected constant irony.

“Messieurs,” she said, “will you deign to inform me of what is about to take place? Is the widow of your former master of less importance in your esteem than the Sieurs Vieilleville, Birago, and Chiverni?”

“Madame,” replied the cardinal, in a tone of gallantry, “our duty as men, taking precedence of that of statecraft, forbids us to alarm the fair sex by false reports. But this morning there is indeed good reason to confer with you on the affairs of the country. You must excuse my brother for having already given orders to the gentlemen you mention, — orders which were purely military, and therefore did not concern you ; the matters of real importance are still to be decided. If you are willing, we will now go to the *lever* of the king and queen ; it is nearly time.”

"But what is all this, Monsieur le duc?" cried Catherine, pretending alarm. "Is anything the matter?"

"The Reformation, madame, is no longer a mere heresy; it is a party, which has taken arms and is coming here to snatch the king away from you."

Catherine, the cardinal, the duke, and the three gentlemen made their way to the staircase through the gallery, which was crowded with courtiers who, being off duty, no longer had the right of entrance to the royal apartments, and stood in two hedges on either side. Gondi, who had watched them while the queen-mother talked with the Lorraine princes, whispered in her ear, in good Tuscan, two words which afterwards became proverbs, — words which are the keynote to one aspect of her regal character: "*Odiare e aspettare*" — "Hate and wait."

Pardaillan, who had gone to order the officer of the guard at the gate of the château to let the clerk of the queen's furrier enter, found Christophe open-mouthed before the portal, staring at the façade built by the good king Louis XII., on which there was at that time a much greater number of grotesque carvings than we see there to-day, — grotesque, that is to say, if we may judge by those that remain to us. For instance, persons curious in such matters may remark the figure of a woman carved on the capital of one of the portal columns, with her robe caught up to show to a stout monk crouching in the capital of the corresponding column "that which Brunelle showed to Marphise;" while above this portal stood, at the time of which we write, the statue of Louis XII. Several of the window-

casings of this façade, carved in the same style, and now, unfortunately, destroyed, amused, or seemed to amuse Christophe, on whom the arquebusiers of the guard were raining jests.

"He would like to live there," said the sub-corporal, playing with the cartridges of his weapon, which were prepared for use in the shape of little sugar-loaves, and slung to the baldricks of the men.

"Hey, Parisian!" said another; "you never saw the like of that, did you?"

"He recognizes the good King Louis XII.," said a third.

Christophe pretended not to hear, and tried to exaggerate his amazement, the result being that his silly attitude and behavior before the guard proved an excellent passport to the eyes of Pardaillan.

"The queen has not yet risen," said the young captain; "come and wait for her in the *salle des gardes*."

Christophe followed Pardaillan rather slowly. On the way he stopped to admire the pretty gallery in the form of an arcade, where the courtiers of Louis XII. awaited the reception-hour when it rained, and where, at the present moment, were several seigneurs attached to the Guises; for the staircase (so well preserved to the present day) which led to their apartments is at the end of this gallery in a tower, the architecture of which commends itself to the admiration of intelligent beholders.

"Well, well! did you come here to study the carving of images?" cried Pardaillan, as Christophe stopped before the charming sculptures of the balustrade which

unites, or, if you prefer it, separates the columns of each arcade.

Christophe followed the young officer to the grand staircase, not without a glance of ecstasy at the semi-Moorish tower. The weather was fine, and the court was crowded with staff-officers and seigneurs, talking together in little groups, — their dazzling uniforms and court-dresses brightening a spot which the marvels of architecture, then fresh and new, had already made so brilliant.

“Come in here,” said Pardaillan, making Lecamus a sign to follow him through a carved wooden door leading to the second floor, which the door-keeper opened on recognizing the young officer.

It is easy to imagine Christophe's amazement as he entered the great *salle des gardes*, then so vast that military necessity has since divided it by a partition into two chambers. It occupied on the second floor (that of the king), as did the corresponding hall on the first floor (that of the queen-mother), one third of the whole front of the château facing the courtyard; and it was lighted by two windows to right and two to left of the tower in which the famous staircase winds up. The young captain went to the door of the royal chamber, which opened upon this vast hall, and told one of the two pages on duty to inform Madame Dayelles, the queen's bedchamber woman, that the furrier was in the hall with her surcoat.

On a sign from Pardaillan Christophe placed himself near an officer, who was seated on a stool at the corner of a fireplace as large as his father's whole shop, which was at the end of the great hall, opposite to a precisely

similar fireplace at the other end. While talking to this officer, a lieutenant, he contrived to interest him with an account of the stagnation of trade. Christophe seemed so thoroughly a shopkeeper that the officer imparted that conviction to the captain of the Scotch guard, who came in from the courtyard to question Lecamus, all the while watching him covertly and narrowly.

However much Christophe Lecamus had been warned, it was impossible for him to really apprehend the cold ferocity of the interests between which Chaudieu had slipped him. To an observer of this scene, who had known the secrets of it as the historian understands it in the light of to-day, there was indeed cause to tremble for this young man, — the hope of two families, — thrust between those powerful and pitiless machines, Catherine and the Guises. But do courageous beings, as a rule, measure the full extent of their dangers? By the way in which the port of Blois, the château, and the town were guarded, Christophe was prepared to find spies and traps everywhere; and he therefore resolved to conceal the importance of his mission and the tension of his mind under the empty-headed and shopkeeping appearance with which he presented himself to the eyes of young Pardaillan, the officer of the guard, and the Scottish captain.

The agitation which, in a royal castle, always attends the hour of the king's rising, was beginning to show itself. The great lords, whose horses, pages, or grooms remained in the outer courtyard, — for no one, except the king and the queens, had the right to enter the inner courtyard on horseback, — were mounting by groups the

magnificent staircase, and filling by degrees the vast hall, the beams of which are now stripped of the decorations that then adorned them. Miserable little red tiles have replaced the ingenious mosaics of the floors; and the thick walls, then draped with the crown tapestries and glowing with all the arts of that unique period of the splendors of humanity, are now denuded and whitewashed! Reformers and Catholics were pressing in to hear the news and to watch faces, quite as much as to pay their duty to the king. François II.'s excessive love for Mary Stuart, to which neither the queen-mother nor the Guises made any opposition, and the politic compliance of Mary Stuart herself, deprived the king of all regal power. At seventeen years of age he knew nothing of royalty but its pleasures, or of marriage beyond the indulgence of first passion. As a matter of fact, all present paid their court to Queen Mary and to her uncles, the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise, rather than to the king.

This stir took place before Christophe, who watched the arrival of each new personage with natural eagerness. A magnificent portière, on either side of which stood two pages and two soldiers of the Scotch guard, then on duty, showed him the entrance to the royal chamber, — the chamber so fatal to the son of the present Duc de Guise, the second Balafré, who fell at the foot of the bed now occupied by Mary Stuart and François II. The queen's maids of honor surrounded the fireplace opposite to that where Christophe was being "talked with" by the captain of the guard. This second fireplace was considered the *chimney of honor*. It was built in the thick wall of the Salle de Conseil,

between the door of the royal chamber and that of the council-hall, so that the maids of honor and the lords in waiting who had the right to be there were on the direct passage of the king and queen. The courtiers were certain on this occasion of seeing Catherine, for her maids of honor, dressed like the rest of the court ladies, in black, came up the staircase from the queen-mother's apartment, and took their places, marshalled by the Comtesse de Fiesque, on the side toward the council-hall and opposite to the maids of honor of the young queen, led by the Duchesse de Guise, who occupied the other side of the fireplace on the side of the royal bedroom. The courtiers left an open space between the ranks of these young ladies (who all belonged to the first families of the kingdom), which none but the greatest lords had the right to enter. The Comtesse de Fiesque and the Duchesse de Guise were, in virtue of their office, seated in the midst of these noble maids, who were all standing.

The first gentleman who approached the dangerous ranks was the Duc d'Orléans, the king's brother, who had come down from his apartment on the third floor, accompanied by Monsieur de Cypierre, his governor. This young prince, destined before the end of the year to reign under the title of Charles IX., was only ten years old and extremely timid. The Duc d'Anjou and the Duc d'Alençon, his younger brothers, also the Princesse Marguerite, afterwards the wife of Henri IV. (la Reine Margot), were too young to come to court, and were therefore kept by their mother in her own apartments. The Duc d'Orléans, richly dressed after the fashion of the times, in silken trunk-hose, a close-fitting jacket of

cloth of gold embroidered with black flowers, and a little mantle of embroidered velvet, all black, for he still wore mourning for his father, bowed to the two ladies of honor and took his place beside his mother's maids. Already full of antipathy for the adherents of the house of Guise, he replied coldly to the remarks of the duchess and leaned his arm on the back of the chair of the Comtesse de Fiesque. His governor, Monsieur de Cypierre, one of the noblest characters of that day, stood beside him like a shield. Amyot (afterwards Bishop of Auxerre and translator of Plutarch), in the simple soutane of an abbé, also accompanied the young prince, being his tutor, as he was of the two other princes, whose affection became so profitable to him.

Between the "chimney of honor" and the other chimney at the end of the hall, around which were grouped the guards, their captain, a few courtiers, and Christophe carrying his box of furs, the Chancellor Olivier, protector and predecessor of l'Hôpital, in the robes which the chancellors of France have always worn, was walking up and down with the Cardinal de Tournon, who had recently returned from Rome. The pair were exchanging a few whispered sentences in the midst of great attention from the lords of the court, massed against the wall which separated the *salle des gardes* from the royal bedroom, like a living tapestry backed by the rich tapestry of art crowded by a thousand personages. In spite of the present grave events, the court presented the appearance of all courts in all lands, at all epochs, and in the midst of the greatest dangers. The courtiers talked of trivial matters, thinking of serious ones; they jested as they studied faces, and appar-

ently concerned themselves about love and the marriage of rich heiresses amid the bloodiest catastrophes.

"What did you think of yesterday's fête?" asked Bourdeilles, seigneur of Brantôme, approaching Mademoiselle de Piennes, one of the queen-mother's maids of honor.

"Messieurs du Baïf et du Bellay were inspired with delightful ideas," she replied, indicating the organizers of the fête, who were standing near. "I thought it all in the worst taste," she added in a low voice.

"You had no part to play in it, I think?" remarked Mademoiselle de Lewiston from the opposite ranks of Queen Mary's maids.

"What are you reading there, madame?" asked Amyot of the Comtesse de Fiesque.

"*'Amadis de Gaule,'* by the Seigneur des Essarts, commissary in ordinary to the king's artillery," she replied.

"A charming work," remarked the beautiful girl who was afterwards so celebrated under the name of Fosseuse when she was lady of honor to Queen Marguerite of Navarre.

"The style is a novelty in form," said Amyot. "Do you accept such barbarisms?" he added, addressing Brantôme.

"They please the ladies, you know," cried Brantôme, crossing over to the Duchesse de Guise, who held the "*Decamerone*" in her hand. "Some of the women of your house must appear in that book, madame," he said. "It is a pity that the Sieur Boccaccio did not live in our day; he would have known plenty of ladies to swell his volume —"

"How shrewd that Monsieur de Brantôme is," said the beautiful Mademoiselle de Limueil to the Comtesse de Fiesque; "he came to us first, but he means to remain in the Guise quarters."

"Hush!" said Madame de Fiesque glancing at the beautiful Limueil. "Attend to what concerns yourself."

The young girl turned her eyes to the door. She was expecting Sardini, a noble Italian, with whom the queen-mother, her relative, married her after an "accident" which happened in the dressing-room of Catherine de' Medici herself; by which the young lady won the honor of having a queen as midwife.

"By the holy Alipantin! Mademoiselle Davila seems to me prettier and prettier every morning," said Monsieur de Robertet, secretary of State, bowing to the ladies of the queen-mother.

The arrival of the secretary of State made no commotion whatever, though his office was precisely what that of a minister is in these days.

"If you really think so, monsieur," said the beauty, "lend me the squib which was written against the Messieurs de Guise; I know it was lent to you."

"It is no longer in my possession," replied the secretary, turning round to bow to the Duchesse de Guise.

"I have it," said the Comte de Grammont to Mademoiselle Davila, "but I will give it you on one condition only."

"Condition! fie!" exclaimed Madame de Fiesque.

"You don't know what it is," replied Grammont.

"Oh! it is easy to guess," remarked la Limueil.

The Italian custom of calling ladies, as peasants call their wives "*la Such-a-one*" was then the fashion at the court of France.

"You are mistaken," said the count, hastily, "the matter simply is to give a letter from my cousin de Jarnac to one of the maids on the other side, *Mademoiselle de Matha*."

"You must not compromise my young ladies," said the Comtesse de Fiesque. "I will deliver the letter myself. — Do you know what is happening in Flanders?" she continued, turning to the Cardinal de Tournon. "It seems that Monsieur d'Egmont is given to surprises."

"He and the Prince of Orange," remarked Cypierre, with a significant shrug of his shoulders.

"The Duke of Alba and Cardinal Granvelle are going there, are they not, monsieur?" said Amyot to the Cardinal de Tournon, who remained standing, gloomy and anxious between the opposing groups after his conversation with the chancellor.

"Happily we are at peace; we need only conquer heresy on the stage," remarked the young Duc d'Orléans, alluding to a part he had played the night before, — that of a knight subduing a hydra which bore upon its foreheads the word "*Reformation*."

Catherine de' Medici, agreeing in this with her daughter-in-law, had allowed a theatre to be made of the great hall (afterwards arranged for the Parliament of Blois), which, as we have already said, connected the château of François I. with that of Louis XII.

The cardinal made no answer to Amyot's question, but resumed his walk through the centre of the hall,

talking in low tones with Monsieur de Robertet and the chancellor. Many persons are ignorant of the difficulties which secretaries of State (subsequently called ministers) met with at the first establishment of their office, and how much trouble the kings of France had in creating it. At this epoch a secretary of State like Robertet was purely and simply a writer; he counted for almost nothing among the princes and grandees who decided the affairs of State. His functions were little more than those of the superintendent of finances, the chancellor, and the keeper of the seals. The kings granted seats at the council by letters-patent to those of their subjects whose advice seemed to them useful in the management of public affairs. Entrance to the council was given in this way to a president of the Chamber of Parliament, to a bishop, or to an untitled favorite. Once admitted to the council, the subject strengthened his position there by obtaining various crown offices on which devolved such prerogatives as the sword of a Constable, the government of provinces, the grand-mastership of artillery, the bâton of a marshal, a leading rank in the army, or the admiralty, or a captaincy of the galleys, often some office at court, like that of grand-master of the household, now held, as we have already said, by the Duc de Guise.

“Do you think that the Duc de Nemours will marry Françoise?” said Madame de Guise to the tutor of the Duc d’Orléans.

“Ah, madame,” he replied, “I know nothing but Latin.”

This answer made all who were within hearing of it

smile. The seduction of Françoise de Rohan by the Duc de Nemours was the topic of all conversations; but, as the duke was cousin to François II., and doubly allied to the house of Valois through his mother, the Guises regarded him more as the seduced than the seducer. Nevertheless, the power of the house of Rohan was such that the Duc de Nemours was obliged, after the death of François II., to leave France in consequence of suits brought against him by the Rohans; which suits the Guises settled. The duke's marriage with the Duchesse de Guise after Poltrot's assassination of her husband in 1563, may explain the question which she put to Amyot, by revealing the rivalry which must have existed between Mademoiselle de Rohan and the duchess.

"Do see that group of the discontented over there?" said the Comte de Grammont, motioning toward the Messieurs de Coligny, the Cardinal de Châtillon, Danville, Thoré, Moret, and several other seigneurs suspected of tampering with the Reformation, who were standing between two windows on the other side of the fireplace.

"The Huguenots are bestirring themselves," said Cypierre. "We know that Théodore de Bèze has gone to Nérac to induce the Queen of Navarre to declare for the Reformers — by abjuring publicly," he added, looking at the *bailli* of Orléans, who held the office of chancellor to the Queen of Navarre, and was watching the court attentively.

"She will do it!" said the *bailli*, dryly.

This personage, the Orléans Jacques Cœur, one of the richest burghers of the day, was named Grosloot,

and had charge of Jeanne d'Albret's business with the court of France.

"Do you really think so?" said the chancellor of France, appreciating the full importance of Groslot's declaration.

"Are you not aware," said the burgher, "that the Queen of Navarre has nothing of the woman in her except sex? She is wholly for things virile; her powerful mind turns to the great affairs of State; her heart is invincible under adversity."

"Monsieur le cardinal," whispered the Chancellor Olivier to Monsieur de Tournon, who had overheard Groslot, "what do you think of that audacity?"

"The Queen of Navarre did well in choosing for her chancellor a man from whom the house of Lorraine borrows money, and who offers his house to the king, if his Majesty visits Orléans," replied the cardinal.

The chancellor and the cardinal looked at each other, without venturing to further communicate their thoughts; but Robertet expressed them, for he thought it necessary to show more devotion to the Guises than these great personages, inasmuch as he was smaller than they.

"It is a great misfortune that the house of Navarre, instead of abjuring the religion of its fathers, does not abjure the spirit of vengeance and rebellion which the Connétable de Bourbon breathed into it," he said aloud. "We shall see the quarrels of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons revive in our day."

"No," said Groslot, "there's another Louis XI. in the Cardinal de Lorraine."

"And also in Queen Catherine," replied Robertet.

At this moment Madame Dayelle, the favorite bed-chamber woman of Queen Mary Stuart, crossed the hall, and went toward the royal chamber. Her passage caused a general commotion.

“We shall soon enter,” said Madame de Fiesque.

“I don’t think so,” replied the Duchesse de Guise.
“Their Majesties will come out ; a grand council is to be held.”

VI.

THE LITTLE LEVER OF FRANÇOIS II.

MADAME DAYELLE glided into the royal chamber after scratching on the door, — a respectful custom, invented by Catherine de' Medici and adopted by the court of France.

“How is the weather, my dear Dayelle?” said Queen Mary; showing her fresh young face out of the bed, and shaking the curtains.

“Ah! madame —”

“What's the matter, my Dayelle? You look as if the archers of the guard were after you.”

“Oh! madame, is the king still asleep?”

“Yes.”

“We are to leave the château; Monsieur le cardinal requests me to tell you so, and to ask you to make the king agree to it.”

“Do you know why, my good Dayelle?”

“The Reformers want to seize you and carry you off.”

“Ah! that new religion does not leave me a minute's peace! I dreamed last night that I was in prison, — I, who will some day unite the crowns of the three noblest kingdoms in the world!”

“Therefore it could be only a dream, madame.”

"Carry me off! well, 't would be rather pleasant; but on account of religion, and by heretics — oh, that would be horrid!"

The queen sprang from the bed and placed herself in a large arm-chair of red velvet before the fireplace, after Dayelle had given her a dressing-gown of black velvet, which she fastened loosely round her waist by a silken cord. Dayelle lit the fire, for the mornings are cool on the banks of the Loire in the month of May.

"My uncles must have received some news during the night?" said the queen, inquiringly to Dayelle, whom she treated with great familiarity.

"Messieurs de Guise have been walking together from early morning on the terrace, so as not to be overheard by any one; and there they received messengers, who came in hot haste from all the different points of the kingdom where the Reformers are stirring. Madame la reine mère was there too, with her Italians, hoping she would be consulted; but no, she was not admitted to the council."

"She must have been furious."

"All the more because she was so angry yesterday," replied Dayelle. "They say that when she saw your Majesty appear in that beautiful dress of woven gold, with the charming veil of tan-colored crape, she was none too pleased —"

"Leave us, my good Dayelle, the king is waking up. Let no one, even those who have the little *entrées*, disturb us; an affair of State is in hand, and my uncles will not disturb us."

"Why! my dear Mary, already out of bed? Is it daylight?" said the young king, waking up.

"My dear darling, while we were asleep the wicked waked, and now they are forcing us to leave this delightful place."

"What makes you think of wicked people, my treasure? I am sure we enjoyed the prettiest fête in the world last night — if it were not for the Latin words those gentlemen will put into our French."

"Ah!" said Mary, "your language is really in very good taste, and Rabelais exhibits it finely."

"You are such a learned woman! I am so vexed that I can't sing your praises in verse. If I were not the king, I would take my brother's tutor, Amyot, and let him make me as accomplished as Charles."

"You need not envy your brother, who writes verses and shows them to me, asking for mine in return. You are the best of the four, and will make as good a king as you are the dearest of lovers. Perhaps that is why your mother does not like you! But never mind! I, dear heart, will love you for all the world."

"I have no great merit in loving such a perfect queen," said the little king. "I don't know what prevented me from kissing you before the whole court when you danced the *branle* with the torches last night! I saw plainly that all the other women were mere servants compared to you, my beautiful Mary."

"It may be only prose you speak, but it is ravishing speech, dear darling, for it is love that says those words. And you — you know well, my beloved, that were you only a poor little page, I should love you as much as I do now. And yet, there is nothing so sweet as to whisper to one's self: 'My lover is king!'"

"Oh! the pretty arm! Why must we dress our-

selves? I love to pass my fingers through your silky hair and tangle its blond curls. Ah ça! sweet one, don't let your women kiss that pretty throat and those white shoulders any more; don't allow it, I say. It is too much that the fogs of Scotland ever touched them!"

"Won't you come with me to see my dear country? The Scotch love you; there are no rebellions *there*!"

"Who rebels in this our kingdom?" said François, crossing his dressing-gown and taking Mary Stuart on his knee.

"Oh! 't is all very charming, I know that," she said, withdrawing her cheek from the king; "but it is your business to reign, if you please, my sweet sire."

"Why talk of reigning? This morning I wish —"

"Why say *wish* when you have only to will all? That's not the speech of a king, nor that of a lover. — But no more of love just now; let us drop it! We have business more important to talk of."

"Oh! cried the king, "it is long since we have had any business. Is it amusing?"

"No," said Mary, "not at all; we are to move from Blois."

"I'll wager, darling, you have seen your uncles, who manage so well that I, at seventeen years of age, am no better than a *roi fainéant*. In fact, I don't know why I have attended any of the councils since the first. They could manage matters just as well by putting the crown in my chair; I see only through their eyes, and am forced to consent to things blindly."

"Oh! monsieur," said the queen, rising from the king's knee with a little air of indignation, "you said you would never worry me again on this subject, and

that my uncles used the royal power only for the good of your people. Your people! — they are so nice! They would gobble you up like a strawberry if you tried to rule them yourself. They want a warrior, a rough master with mailed hands; whereas you — you are a darling whom I love as you are; whom I should never love otherwise, — do you hear me, monsieur?" she added, kissing the forehead of the lad, who seemed inclined to rebel at her speech, but softened at her kisses.

"Oh! how I wish they were not your uncles," cried Francois II. "I particularly dislike the cardinal; and when he puts on his wheedling air and his submissive manner and says to me, bowing: 'Sire, the honor of the crown and the faith of your fathers forbid your Majesty to — this and that,' I am sure he is working only for his cursed house of Lorraine."

"Oh, how well you mimicked him!" cried the queen. "But why don't you make the Guises inform you of what is going on, so that when you attain your grand majority you may know how to reign yourself? I am your wife, and your honor is mine. Trust me! we will reign together, my darling; but it won't be a bed of roses for us until the day comes when we have our own wills. There is nothing so difficult for a king as to reign. Am I a queen, for example? Don't you know that your mother returns me evil for all the good my uncles do to raise the splendor of your throne? Hey! what difference between them! My uncles are great princes, nephews of Charlemagne, filled with ardor and ready to die for you; whereas this daughter of a doctor or a shopkeeper, queen of France by accident, scolds like a burgher-woman who can't manage

her own household. She is discontented because she can't set every one by the ears; and then she looks at me with a sour, pale face, and says from her pinched lips: 'My daughter, you are the queen; I am only the second woman in the kingdom' (she is really furious, you know, my darling), 'but if I were in your place I should not wear crimson velvet while all the court is in mourning; neither should I appear in public with my own hair and no jewels, because what is not becoming in a simple lady is still less becoming in a queen. Also I should not dance myself, I should content myself with seeing others dance.' — That's what she says to me —"

"Heavens!" cried the king, "I think I hear her coming. "If she were to know —"

"Oh, how you tremble before her. She worries you. Only say so, and we will send her away. Faith, she's Florentine and we can't help her tricking you, but when it comes to worrying —"

"For Heaven's sake, Mary, hold your tongue!" said François, frightened and also pleased; "I don't want you to lose her good-will."

"Don't be afraid that she will ever break with *me*, who will some day wear the three noblest crowns in the world, my dearest little king," cried Mary Stuart. "Though she hates me for a thousand reasons she is always caressing me in the hope of turning me against my uncles."

"Hates you!"

"Yes, my angel; and if I had not proofs of that feeling such as women only understand, for they alone know its malignity, I would forgive her perpetual opposition to our dear love, my darling. Is it my fault that your

father could not endure Mademoiselle Medici or that his son loves me? The truth is, she hates me so much that if you had not put yourself into a rage, we should each have had our separate chamber at Saint-Germain, and also here. She pretended it was the custom of the kings and queens of France. Custom, indeed! it was your father's custom, and that is easily understood. As for your grandfather, François, the good man set up the custom for the convenience of his loves. Therefore, I say, take care. And if we have to leave this place, be sure that we are not separated."

"Leave Blois! Mary, what do you mean? I don't wish to leave this beautiful château, where we can see the Loire and the country all round us, with a town at our feet and all these pretty gardens. If I go away it will be to Italy with you, to see St. Peter's, and Raffaele's pictures."

"And the orange-trees? Oh! my darling king, if you knew the longing your Mary has to ramble among the orange-groves in fruit and flower!"

"Let us go, then!" cried the king.

"Go!" exclaimed the grand-master as he entered the room. "Yes, sire, you must leave Blois. Pardon my boldness in entering your chamber; but circumstances are stronger than etiquette, and I come to entreat you to hold a council."

Finding themselves thus surprised, Mary and François hastily separated, and on their faces was the same expression of offended royal majesty.

"You are too much of a grand-master, Monsieur de Guise," said the king, though controlling his anger.

"The devil take lovers," murmured the cardinal in Catherine's ear.

"My son," said the queen-mother, appearing behind the cardinal; "it is a matter concerning your safety and that of your kingdom."

"Heresy wakes while you have slept, sire," said the cardinal.

"Withdraw into the hall," cried the little king, "and then we will hold a council."

"Madame," said the grand-master to the young queen; "the son of your furrier has brought some furs, which are just in time for the journey, for it is probable we shall sail down the Loire. But," he added, turning to the queen-mother, "he also wishes to speak to you, madame. While the king dresses, you and Madame la reine had better see and dismiss him, so that we may not be delayed and harassed by this trifle."

"Certainly," said Catherine, thinking to herself, "If he expects to get rid of me by any such trick he little knows me."

The cardinal and the duke withdrew, leaving the two queens and the king alone together. As they crossed the *salle des gardes* to enter the council-chamber, the grand-master told the usher to bring the queen's furrier to him. When Christophe saw the usher approaching from the farther end of the great hall, he took him, on account of his uniform, for some great personage, and his heart sank within him. But that sensation, natural as it was at the approach of the critical moment, grew terrible when the usher, whose movement had attracted the eyes of all that brilliant assembly upon Christophe, his homely face and his bundles, said to him:—

"Messeigneurs the Cardinal de Lorraine and the

Grand-master wish to speak to you in the council chamber."

"Can I have been betrayed?" thought the helpless ambassador of the Reformers.

Christophe followed the usher with lowered eyes, which he did not raise till he stood in the great council-chamber, the size of which is almost equal to that of the *salle des gardes*. The two Lorrain princes were there alone, standing before the magnificent fireplace, which backs against that in the *salle des gardes* around which the ladies of the two queens were grouped.

"You have come from Paris; which route did you take?" said the cardinal.

"I came by water, monseigneur," replied the reformer.

"How did you enter Blois?" asked the grand master.

"By the docks, monseigneur."

"Did no one question you?" exclaimed the duke, who was watching the young man closely.

"No, monseigneur. To the first soldier who looked as if he meant to stop me I said I came on duty to the two queens, to whom my father was furrier."

"What is happening in Paris?" asked the cardinal.

"They are still looking for the murderer of the President Minard."

"Are you not the son of my surgeon's greatest friend?" said the Duc de Guise, misled by the candor of Christophe's expression after his first alarm had passed away.

"Yes, monseigneur."

The Grand-master turned aside, abruptly raised the

portière which concealed the double door of the council-chamber, and showed his face to the whole assembly, among whom he was searching for the king's surgeon. Ambroise Paré, standing in a corner, caught a glance which the duke cast upon him, and immediately advanced. Ambroise, who at this time was inclined to the reformed religion, eventually adopted it; but the friendship of the Guises and that of the kings of France guaranteed him against the evils which overtook his co-religionists. The duke, who considered himself under obligations for life to Ambroise Paré, had lately caused him to be appointed chief-surgeon to the king.

"What is it, monseigneur?" said Ambroise. "Is the king ill? I think it likely."

"Likely? Why?"

"The queen is too pretty," replied the surgeon.

"Ah!" exclaimed the duke in astonishment. "However, that is not the matter now," he added after a pause. "Ambroise, I want you to see a friend of yours." So saying he drew him to the door of the council-room and showed him Christophe.

"Ha! true, monseigneur," cried the surgeon, extending his hand to the young furrier. "How is your father, my lad?"

"Very well, Maitre Ambroise," replied Christophe.

"What are you doing at court?" asked the surgeon. "It is not your business to carry parcels; your father intends you for the law. Do you want the protection of these two great princes to make you a solicitor?"

"Indeed I do!" said Christophe; "but I am here

only in the interests of my father; and if you could intercede for us, please do so," he added in a piteous tone; "and ask the Grand Master for an order to pay certain sums that are due to my father, for he is at his wit's end just now for money."

The cardinal and the duke glanced at each other and seemed satisfied.

"Now leave us," said the duke to the surgeon, making him a sign. "And you my friend," turning to Christophe; "do your errand quickly and return to Paris. My secretary will give you a pass, for it is not safe, *mordieu*, to be travelling on the high-roads!"

Neither of the brothers formed the slightest suspicion of the grave importance of Christophe's errand, convinced, as they now were, that he was really the son of the good Catholic Lecamus, the court furrier, sent to collect payment for their wares.

"Take him close to the door of the queen's chamber; she will probably ask for him soon," said the cardinal to the surgeon, motioning to Christophe.

While the son of the furrier was undergoing this brief examination in the council-chamber, the king, leaving the queen in company with her mother-in-law, had passed into his dressing-room, which was entered through another small room next to the chamber.

Standing in the wide recess of an immense window, Catherine looked at the gardens, her mind a prey to painful thoughts. She saw that in all probability one of the greatest captains of the age would be foisted that very day into the place and power of her son, the king of France, under the formidable title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Before this peril she stood

alone, without power of action, without defence. She might have been likened to a phantom, as she stood there in her mourning garments (which she had not quitted since the death of Henri II.), so motionless was her pallid face in the grasp of her bitter reflections. Her black eyes floated in that species of indecision for which great statesmen are so often blamed, though it comes from the vast extent of the glance with which they embrace all difficulties, — setting one against the other, and adding up, as it were, all chances before deciding on a course. Her ears rang, her blood tingled, and yet she stood there calm and dignified, all the while measuring in her soul the depths of the political abyss which lay before her, like the natural depths which rolled away at her feet. This day was the second of those terrible days (that of the arrest of the Vidame of Chartres having been the first) which she was destined to meet in so great numbers throughout her regal life ; it also witnessed her last blunder in the school of power. Though the sceptre seemed escaping from her hands, she wished to seize it ; and she did seize it by a flash of that power of will which was never relaxed by either the disdain of her father-in-law, François I., and his court, — where, in spite of her rank of dauphiness, she had been of no account, — or the constant repulses of her husband, Henri II., and the terrible opposition of her rival, Diane de Poitiers. A man would never have fathomed this thwarted queen ; but the fair-haired Mary — so subtle, so clever, so girlish, and already so well-trained — examined her out of the corners of her eyes as she hummed an Italian air and assumed a careless countenance. Without being

able to guess the storms of repressed ambition which sent the dew of a cold sweat to the forehead of the Florentine, the pretty Scotch girl, with her wilful, piquant face, knew very well that the advancement of her uncle the Duc de Guise to the lieutenant-generalship of the kingdom was filling the queen-mother with inward rage. Nothing amused her more than to watch her mother-in-law, in whom she saw only an intriguing woman of low birth, always ready to avenge herself. The face of the one was grave and gloomy, and somewhat terrible, by reason of the livid tones which transform the skin of Italian women to yellow ivory by daylight, though it recovers its dazzling brilliancy under candlelight; the face of the other was fair and fresh and gay. At sixteen, Mary Stuart's skin had that exquisite blond whiteness which made her beauty so celebrated. Her fresh and piquant face, with its pure lines, shone with the roguish mischief of childhood, expressed in the regular eyebrows, the vivacious eyes, and the archness of the pretty mouth. Already she displayed those feline graces which nothing, not even captivity nor the sight of her dreadful scaffold, could lessen. The two queens—one at the dawn, the other in the midsummer of life—presented at this moment the utmost contrast. Catherine was an imposing queen, an impenetrable widow, without other passion than that of power. Mary was a light-hearted, careless bride, making playthings of her triple crowns. One foreboded great evils,—foreseeing the assassination of the Guises as the only means of suppressing enemies who were resolved to rise above the Throne and the Parliament; foreseeing also the bloodshed of a long and bitter struggle; while

the other little anticipated her own judicial murder. A sudden and strange reflection calmed the mind of the Italian.

"That sorceress and Ruggiero both declare this reign is coming to an end ; my difficulties will not last long," she thought.

And so, strangely enough, an occult science forgotten in our day — that of astrology — supported Catherine at this moment, as it did, in fact, throughout her life ; for, as she witnessed the minute fulfilment of the prophecies of those who practised the art, her belief in it steadily increased.

"You are very gloomy, madame," said Mary Stuart, taking from the hands of her waiting-woman, Dayelle, a little cap and placing the point of it on the parting of her hair, while two wings of rich lace surrounded the tufts of blond curls which clustered on her temples.

The pencil of many painters have so frequently represented this head-dress that it is thought to have belonged exclusively to Mary Queen of Scots ; whereas it was really invented by Catherine de' Medici, when she put on mourning for Henri II. But she never knew how to wear it with the grace of her daughter-in-law, to whom it was becoming. This annoyance was not the least among the many which the queen-mother cherished against the young queen.

"Is the queen reproving me?" said Catherine, turning to Mary.

"I owe you all respect, and should not dare to do so," said the Scottish queen, maliciously, glancing at Dayelle.

Placed between the rival queens, the favorite waiting-

woman stood rigid as an andiron ; a smile of comprehension might have cost her her life.

"Can I be as gay as you, after losing the late king, and now beholding my son's kingdom about to burst into flames?"

"Public affairs do not concern women," said Mary Stuart. "Besides, my uncles are there."

These words were, under the circumstances, like so many poisoned arrows.

"Let us look at our furs, madame," replied the Italian, sarcastically ; "that will employ us on our legitimate female affairs while your uncles decide those of the kingdom."

"Oh ! but we will go to the Council, madame ; we shall be more useful than you think."

"We !" said Catherine, with an air of astonishment. "But I do not understand Latin, myself."

"You think me very learned," cried Mary Stuart, laughing, "but I assure you, madame, I study only to reach the level of the Medici, and learn how to *cure* the wounds of the kingdom."

Catherine was silenced by this sharp thrust, which referred to the origin of the Medici, who were descended, some said, from a doctor of medicine, others from a rich druggist. She made no direct answer. Dayelle colored as her mistress looked at her, asking for the applause that even queens demand from their inferiors if there are no other spectators.

"Your charming speeches, madame, will unfortunately cure the wounds of neither Church nor State," said Catherine at last, with her calm and cold dignity. "The science of my fathers in that direction gave them

thrones ; whereas if you continue to trifle in the midst of danger you are liable to lose yours."

It was at this moment that Ambroise Paré, the chief surgeon, scratched softly on the door, and Madame Dayelle, opening it, admitted Christophe.

VII.

A DRAMA IN A SURCOAT.

THE young reformer intended to study Catherine's face, all the while affecting a natural embarrassment at finding himself in such a place; but his proceedings were much hastened by the eagerness with which the younger queen darted to the cartons to see her surcoat.

"Madame," said Christophe, addressing Catherine.

He turned his back on the other queen and on Day-elle, instantly profiting by the attention the two women were eager to bestow upon the furs to play a bold stroke.

"What do you want of me?" said Catherine giving him a searching look.

Christophe had put the treaty proposed by the Prince de Condé, the plan of the Reformers, and the detail of their forces in his bosom between his shirt and his cloth jacket, folding them, however, within the bill which Catherine owed to the furrier.

"Madame," he said, "my father is in horrible need of money, and if you will deign to cast your eyes over your bill," here he unfolded the paper and put the treaty on the top of it, "you will see that your Majesty owes him six thousand crowns. Have the goodness to take pity on us. See, madame!" and he held

the treaty out to her. "Read it; the account dates from the time the late king came to the throne."

Catherine was bewildered by the preamble of the treaty which met her eye, but she did not lose her head. She folded the paper quickly, admiring the audacity and presence of mind of the youth, and feeling sure that after performing such a masterly stroke he would not fail to understand her. She therefore tapped him on the head with the folded paper, saying:—

"It is very clumsy of you, my little friend, to present your bill before the furs. Learn to know women. You must never ask us to pay until the moment when we are satisfied."

"Is that traditional?" said the young queen, turning to her mother-in-law, who made no reply.

"Ah, mesdames, pray excuse my father," said Christophe. "If he had not had such need of money you would not have had your furs at all. The country is in arms, and there are so many dangers to run in getting here that nothing but our great distress would have brought me. No one but me was willing to risk them."

"The lad is new to his business," said Mary Stuart, smiling.

It may not be useless, for the understanding of this trifling, but very important scene, to remark that a surcoat was, as the name implies (*sur cotte*), a species of close-fitting spencer which women wore over their bodies and down to their thighs, defining the figure. This garment protected the back, chest, and throat from cold. These surcoats were lined with fur, a band of which, wide or narrow as the case might be

bordered the outer material. Mary Stuart, as she tried the garment on, looked at herself in a large Venetian mirror to see the effect behind, thus leaving her mother-in-law an opportunity to examine the papers, the bulk of which might have excited the young queen's suspicions had she noticed it.

"Never tell women of the dangers you have run when you have come out of them safe and sound," she said, turning to show herself to Christophe.

"Ah! madame, I have your bill, too," he said, looking at her with well-played simplicity.

The young queen eyed him, but did not take the paper; and she noticed, though without at the moment drawing any conclusions, that he had taken her bill from his pocket, whereas he had carried Queen Catherine's in his bosom. Neither did she find in the lad's eyes that glance of admiration which her presence invariably excited in all beholders. But she was so engrossed by her surcoat that, for the moment, she did not ask herself the meaning of such indifference.

"Take the bill, Dayelle," she said to her waiting-woman; "give it to Monsieur de Versailles (Loménie) and tell him from me to pay it."

"Oh! madame," said Christophe, "if you do not ask the king or monseigneur the grand-master to sign me an order your gracious word will have no effect."

"You are rather more eager than becomes a subject, my friend," said Mary Stuart. "Do you not believe my royal word?"

The king now appeared, in silk stockings and trunk-hose (the breeches of that period), but without his doublet and mantle; he had, however, a rich loose coat of velvet edged with minever.

“Who is the wretch who dares to doubt your word?” he said, overhearing, in spite of the distance, his wife’s last words.

The door of the dressing-room was hidden by the royal bed. This room was afterwards called “the old cabinet,” to distinguish it from the fine cabinet of pictures which Henri III. constructed at the farther end of the same suite of rooms, next to the hall of the States-general. It was in the old cabinet that Henri III. hid the murderers when he sent for the Duc de Guise, while he himself remained hidden in the new cabinet during the murder, only emerging in time to see the overbearing subject for whom there were no longer prisons, tribunals, judges, nor even laws, draw his last breath. Were it not for these terrible circumstances the historian of to-day could hardly trace the former occupation of these cabinets, now filled with soldiers. A quartermaster writes to his mistress on the very spot where the pensive Catherine once decided on her course between the parties.

“Come with me, my friend,” said the queen-mother, “and I will see that you are paid. Commerce must live, and money is its backbone.”

“Go, my lad,” cried the young queen, laughing; “my august mother knows more than I do about commerce.”

Catherine was about to leave the room without replying to this last taunt; but she remembered that her indifference to it might provoke suspicion, and she answered hastily: —

“But you, my dear, understand the business of love.”

Then she descended to her own apartments.

“Put away these furs, Dayelle, and let us go to the Council, monsieur,” said Mary to the young king, enchanted with the opportunity of deciding in the absence of the queen-mother so important a question as the lieutenant-generalship of the kingdom.

Mary Stuart took the king's arm. Dayelle went out before them, whispering to the pages; one of whom (it was young Téligny, who afterwards perished so miserably during the Saint-Bartholomew) cried out: —

“The king!”

Hearing the words, the two soldiers of the guard presented arms, and the two pages went forward to the door of the Council-room through the lane of courtiers and that of the maids of honor of the two queens. All the members of the Council then grouped themselves about the door of their chamber, which was not very far from the door to the staircase. The grand-master, the cardinal, and the chancellor advanced to meet the young sovereigns, who smiled to several of the maids of honor and replied to the remarks of a few courtiers more privileged than the rest. But the queen, evidently impatient, drew François II. as quickly as possible toward the Council-chamber. When the sound of arquebuses, dropping heavily on the floor had announced the entrance of the couple, the pages replaced their caps upon their heads, and the private talk among the courtiers on the gravity of the matters now about to be discussed began again.

“They sent Chiverny to fetch the Connétable, but he has not come,” said one.

“There is not a single prince of the blood present,” said another.

"The chancellor and Monsieur de Tournon looked anxious," remarked a third.

"The grand-master sent word to the keeper of the seals to be sure not to miss this Council; therefore you may be certain they will issue letters-patent."

"Why does the queen-mother stay in her own apartments at such a time?"

"They'll cut out plenty of work for us," remarked Groslet to Cardinal de Châtillon.

In short, everybody had a word to say. Some went and came, in and out of the great hall; others hovered about the maids of honor of both queens, as if it might be possible to catch a few words through a wall three feet thick or through the double doors draped on each side with heavy curtains.

Seated at the upper end of a long table covered with blue velvet, which stood in the middle of the room, the king, near to whom the young queen was seated in an arm-chair, waited for his mother. Robertet, the secretary, was mending pens. The two cardinals, the grand-master, the chancellor, the keeper of the seals, and all the rest of the council looked at the little king, wondering why he did not give them the usual order to sit down.

The two Lorraine princes attributed the queen-mother's absence to some trick of their niece. Incited presently by a significant glance, the audacious cardinal said to his Majesty:—

"Is it the king's good pleasure to begin the council without waiting for Madame la reine-mère?"

François II., without daring to answer directly, said: "Messieurs, be seated."

The cardinal then explained succinctly the dangers of the situation. This great political character, who showed extraordinary ability under these pressing circumstances, led up to the question of the lieutenancy of the kingdom in the midst of the deepest silence. The young king doubtless felt the tyranny that was being exercised over him; he knew that his mother had a deep sense of the rights of the Crown and was fully aware of the danger that threatened his power; he therefore replied to a positive question addressed to him by the cardinal by saying:—

“We will wait for the queen, my mother.”

Suddenly enlightened by the queen-mother's delay, Mary Stuart recalled, in a flash of thought, three circumstances which now struck her vividly: first, the bulk of the papers presented to her mother-in-law, which she had noticed, absorbed as she was, — for a woman who seems to see nothing is often a lynx; next, the place where Christophe had carried them to keep them separate from hers: “Why so?” she thought to herself; and thirdly, she remembered the cold, indifferent glance of the young man, which she suddenly attributed to the hatred of the Reformers to a niece of the Guises. A voice cried to her, “He may have been an emissary of the Huguenots!” Obeying, like all excitable natures, her first impulse, she exclaimed:—

“I will go and fetch my mother myself!”

Then she left the room hurriedly, ran down the staircase, to the amazement of the courtiers and the ladies of honor, entered her mother-in-law's apartments, crossed the guard-room, opened the door of the chamber with the caution of a thief, glided like a shadow

over the carpet, saw no one, and bethought her that she should surely surprise the queen-mother in that magnificent dressing-room which comes between the bedroom and the oratory. The arrangement of this oratory, to which the manners of that period gave a rôle in private life like that of the boudoirs of our day, can still be traced.

By an almost inexplicable chance, when we consider the state of dilapidation into which the Crown has allowed the château of Blois to fall, the admirable woodwork of Catherine's cabinet still exists; and in those delicately carved panels, persons interested in such things may still see traces of Italian splendor, and discover the secret hiding-places employed by the queen-mother. An exact description of these curious arrangements is necessary in order to give a clear understanding of what was now to happen. The woodwork of the oratory then consisted of about a hundred and eighty oblong panels, one hundred of which still exist, all presenting arabesques of different designs, evidently suggested by the most beautiful arabesques of Italy. The wood is live-oak. The red tones, seen through the layer of whitewash put on to avert cholera (useless precaution!), shows very plainly that the ground of the panels was formerly gilt. Certain portions of the design, visible where the wash has fallen away, seem to show that they once detached themselves from the gilded ground in colors, either blue, or red, or green. The multitude of these panels shows an evident intention to foil a search; but even if this could be doubted, the concierge of the château, while devoting the memory of Catherine to the execration of the humanity of our

day, shows at the base of these panels and close to the floor a rather heavy foot-board, which can be lifted, and beneath which still remain the ingenious springs which move the panels. By pressing a knob thus hidden, the queen was able to open certain panels known to her alone, behind which, sunk in the wall, were hiding-places, oblong like the panels, and more or less deep. It is difficult, even in these days of dilapidation, for the best-trained eye to detect which of those panels is thus hinged; but when the eye was distracted by colors and gilding, cleverly used to conceal the joints, we can readily conceive that to find one or two such panels among two hundred was almost an impossible thing.

At the moment when Mary Stuart laid her hand on the somewhat complicated lock of the door of this oratory, the queen-mother, who had just become convinced of the greatness of the Prince de Condé's plans, had touched the spring hidden beneath the foot-board, and one of the mysterious panels had turned over on its hinges. Catherine was in the act of lifting the papers from the table to hide them, intending after that to secure the safety of the devoted messenger who had brought them to her, when, hearing the sudden opening of the door, she at once knew that none but Queen Mary herself would dare thus to enter without announcement.

"You are lost!" she said to Christophe, perceiving that she could no longer put away the papers, nor close with sufficient rapidity the open panel, the secret of which was now betrayed.

Christophe answered her with a glance that was sublime.

“*Porero mio!*” said Catherine, before she looked at her daughter-in-law. “Treason, madame! I hold the traitors at last,” she cried. “Send for the duke and the cardinal; and see that that man,” pointing to Christophe, “does not escape.”

In an instant the able woman had seen the necessity of sacrificing the poor youth. She could not hide him; it was impossible to save him. Eight days earlier it might have been done; but the Guises now knew of the plot; they must already possess the lists she held in her hand, and were evidently drawing the Reformers into a trap. Thus, rejoiced to find in these adversaries the very spirit she desired them to have, her policy now led her to make a merit of the discovery of their plot. These horrible calculations were made during the rapid moment while the young queen was opening the door. Mary Stuart stood dumb for an instant; the gay look left her eyes, which took on the acuteness that suspicion gives to the eyes of all, and which, in hers, became terrible from the suddenness of the change. She glanced from Christophe to the queen-mother and from the queen-mother back to Christophe, — her face expressing malignant doubt. Then she seized a bell, at the sound of which one of the queen-mother’s maids of honor came running in.

“*Mademoiselle du Rouet*, send for the captain of the guard,” said Mary Stuart to the maid of honor, contrary to all etiquette, which was necessarily violated under the circumstances.

While the young queen gave this order, Catherine looked intently at Christophe, as if saying to him, “*Courage!*”

The Reformer understood, and replied by another glance, which seemed to say, "Sacrifice me, as *they* have sacrificed me!"

"Rely on me," said Catherine by a gesture. Then she absorbed herself in the documents as her daughter-in-law turned to him.

"You belong to the Reformed religion?" inquired Mary Stuart of Christophe.

"Yes, madame," he answered.

"I was not mistaken," she murmured as she again noticed in the eyes of the young Reformer the same cold glance in which dislike was hidden beneath an expression of humility.

Pardaillan suddenly appeared, sent by the two Lorrain princes and by the king to escort the queens. The captain of the guard called for by Mary Stuart followed the young officer, who was devoted to the Guises.

"Go and tell the king and the grand-master and the cardinal, from me, to come here at once, and say that I should not take the liberty of sending for them if something of the utmost importance had not occurred. Go, Pardaillan. — As for you, Lewiston, keep guard over that traitor of a Reformer," she said to the Scotchman in his mother-tongue, pointing to Christophe.

The young queen and queen-mother maintained a total silence until the arrival of the king and princes. The moments that elapsed were terrible.

Mary Stuart had betrayed to her mother-in-law, in its fullest extent, the part her uncles were inducing her to play; her constant and habitual distrust and espionage were now revealed, and her young conscience told her how dishonoring to a great queen was the work

that she was doing. Catherine, on the other hand, had yielded out of fear ; she was still afraid of being rightly understood, and she trembled for her future. Both women, one ashamed and angry, the other filled with hatred and yet calm, went to the embrasure of the window and leaned against the casing, one to right, the other to left, silent ; but their feelings were expressed in such speaking glances that they averted their eyes and, with mutual artfulness, gazed through the window at the sky. These two great and superior women had, at this crisis, no greater art of behavior than the vulgarest of their sex. Perhaps it is always thus when circumstances arise which overwhelm the human being. There is, inevitably, a moment when genius itself feels its littleness in presence of great catastrophes.

As for Christophe, he was like a man in the act of rolling down a precipice. Lewiston, the Scotch captain, listened to this silence, watching the son of the furrier and the two queens with soldierly curiosity. The entrance of the king and Mary Stuart's two uncles put an end to the painful situation.

VIII

MARTYRDOM.

THE cardinal went straight to the queen-mother.

“I hold the threads of the conspiracy of the heretics,” said Catherine. “They have sent me this treaty and these documents by the hands of that child,” she added.

During the time that Catherine was explaining matters to the cardinal, Queen Mary whispered a few words to the grand-master.

“What is all this about?” asked the young king, who was left alone in the midst of the violent clash of interests.

“The proofs of what I was telling to your Majesty have not been long in reaching us,” said the cardinal, who had grasped the papers.

The Duc de Guise drew his brother aside without caring that he interrupted him, and said in his ear, “This makes me lieutenant-general without opposition.”

A shrewd glance was the cardinal’s only answer; showing his brother that he fully understood the advantages to be gained from Catherine’s false position.

“Who sent you here?” said the duke to Christophe.

“Chaudieu, the minister,” he replied.

“Young man, you lie!” said the soldier, sharply; “it was the Prince de Condé.”

"The Prince de Condé, monseigneur!" replied Christophe, with a puzzled look. "I never met him. I am studying law with Monsieur de Thou; I am his secretary, and he does not know that I belong to the Reformed religion. I yielded only to the entreaties of the minister."

"Enough!" exclaimed the cardinal. "Call Monsieur de Robertet," he said to Lewiston, "for this young scamp is slyer than an old statesman; he has managed to deceive my brother, and me too; an hour ago I would have given him the sacrament without confession."

"You are not a child, *morbleu!*" cried the duke, "and we'll treat you as a man."

"The heretics have endeavored to beguile your august mother," said the cardinal, addressing the king, and trying to draw him apart to win him over to their ends.

"Alas!" said the queen-mother to her son, assuming a reproachful look and stopping the king at the moment when the cardinal was leading him into the oratory to subject him to his dangerous eloquence, "you see the result of the situation in which I am; they think me irritated by the little influence that I have in public affairs, — I, the mother of four princes of the house of Valois!"

The young king listened attentively. Mary Stuart, seeing the frown upon his brow, took his arm and led him away into the recess of the window, where she cajoled him with sweet speeches in a low voice, no doubt like those she had used that morning in their chamber. The two Guises read the documents given

up to them by Catherine. Finding that they contained information which their spies, and Monsieur Braguelonne, the lieutenant of the Châtelet, had not obtained, they were inclined to believe in the sincerity of Catherine de' Medici. Robertet came and received certain secret orders relative to Christophe. The youthful instrument of the leaders of the Reformation was then led away by four soldiers of the Scottish guard, who took him down the stairs and delivered him to Monsieur de Montrésor, provost of the château. That terrible personage himself, accompanied by six of his men, conducted Christophe to the prison in the vaulted cellar of the tower, now in ruins, which the concierge of the château de Blois shows you with the information that these were the dungeons.

After such an event the Council could be only a formality. The king, the young queen, the Grand-master, and the cardinal returned to it, taking with them the vanquished Catherine, who said no word except to approve the measures proposed by the Guises. In spite of a slight opposition from the Chancellor Olivier (the only person present who said one word that expressed the independence to which his office bound him), the Duc de Guise was appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Robertet brought the required documents, showing a devotion which might be called collusion. The king, giving his arm to his mother, recrossed the *salle des gardes*, announcing to the court as he passed along that on the following day he should leave Blois for the château of Amboise. The latter residence had been abandoned since the time when Charles VIII. accidentally killed himself by

striking his head against the casing of a door on which he had ordered carvings, supposing that he could enter without stooping below the scaffolding. Catherine, to mask the plans of the Guises, remarked aloud that they intended to complete the château of Amboise for the Crown at the same time that her own château of Chenonceaux was finished. But no one was the dupe of that pretext, and all present awaited great events.

After spending about two hours endeavoring to see where he was in the obscurity of the dungeon, Christophe ended by discovering that the place was sheathed in rough woodwork, thick enough to make the square hole into which he was put both healthy and habitable. The door, like that of a pig-pen, was so low that he stooped almost double on entering it. Beside this door was a heavy iron grating, opening upon a sort of corridor, which gave a little light and a little air. This arrangement, in all respects like that of the dungeons of Venice, showed plainly that the architecture of the château of Blois belonged to the Venetian school, which during the Middle Ages, sent so many builders into all parts of Europe. By tapping this species of pit above the woodwork Christophe discovered that the walls which separated his cell to right and left from the adjoining ones were of brick. Striking one of them to get an idea of its thickness, he was somewhat surprised to hear return blows given on the other side.

“Who are you?” said his neighbor, speaking to him through the corridor.

“I am Christophe Lecamus.”

“I,” replied the voice, “am Captain Chaudieu, brother of the minister. I was taken prisoner to-night at

Beaugency; but, luckily, there is nothing against me."

"All is discovered," said Christophe; "you are fortunate to be saved from the fray."

"We have three thousand men at this moment in the forests of the Vendômois, all determined men, who mean to abduct the king and the queen-mother during their journey. Happily La Renaudie was cleverer than I; he managed to escape. You had only just left us when the Guise men surprised us —"

"But I don't know La Renaudie."

"Pooh! my brother has told me all about it," said the captain.

Hearing that, Christophe sat down upon his bench and made no further answer to the pretended captain, for he knew enough of the police to be aware how necessary it was to act with prudence in a prison. In the middle of the night he saw the pale light of a lantern in the corridor, after hearing the ponderous locks of the iron door which closed the cellar groan as they were turned. The provost himself had come to fetch Christophe. This attention to a prisoner who had been left in his dark dungeon for hours without food, struck the poor lad as singular. One of the provost's men bound his hands with a rope and held him by the end of it until they reached one of the lower halls of the château of Louis XII., which was evidently the antechamber to the apartments of some important personage. The provost and his man bade him sit upon a bench, and the man then bound his feet as he had before bound his hands. On a sign from Monsieur de Montrésor the man left the room.

"Now listen to me, my friend," said the provost-marshal, toying with the collar of the Order; for, late as the hour was, he was in full uniform.

This little circumstance gave the young man several thoughts; he saw that all was not over; on the contrary, it was evidently neither to hang nor yet to condemn him that he was brought there.

"My friend, you may spare yourself cruel torture by telling me all you know of the understanding between Monsieur le Prince de Condé and Queen Catherine. Not only will no harm be done to you, but you shall enter the service of Monseigneur the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, who likes intelligent men and on whom your honest face has produced a good impression. The queen-mother is about to be sent back to Florence, and Monsieur de Condé will no doubt be brought to trial. Therefore, believe me, humble folks ought to attach themselves to the great men who are in power. Tell me all; and you will find your profit in it."

"Alas, monsieur," replied Christophe; "I have nothing to tell. I told all I know to Messieurs de Guise in the queen's chamber. Chaudieu persuaded me to put those papers under the eyes of the queen-mother; assuring me that they concerned the peace of the kingdom."

"You have never seen the Prince de Condé?"

"Never."

"Thereupon Monsieur de Montrésor left Christophe and went into the adjoining room; but the youth was not left long alone. The door through which he had been brought opened and gave entrance to several men, who did not close it. Sounds that were far from

reassuring were heard from the courtyard; men were bringing wood and machinery, evidently intended for the punishment of the Reformer's messenger. Christophe's anxiety soon had matter for reflection in the preparations which were made in the hall before his eyes.

Two coarse and ill-dressed serving-men obeyed the orders of a stout, squat, vigorous man, who cast upon Christophe, as he entered, the glance of a cannibal on his victim; he looked him over and *estimated* him, — measuring, like a connoisseur, the strength of his nerves, their power and their endurance. The man was the executioner of Blois. Coming and going, his assistants brought in a mattress, several mallets and wooden wedges, also planks and other articles, the use of which was not plain, nor their look comforting to the poor boy concerned in these preparations, whose blood now curdled in his veins from a vague but most terrible apprehension. Two personages entered the hall at the moment when Monsieur de Montrésor reappeared.

“Hey, nothing ready!” cried the provost-marshal, to whom the new-comers bowed with great respect. “Don't you know,” he said, addressing the stout man and his two assistants, “that Monseigneur the cardinal thinks you already at work? Doctor,” added the provost, turning to one of the new-comers, “this is the man;” and he pointed to Christophe.

The doctor went straight to the prisoner, unbound his hands, and struck him on the breast and back. Science now continued, in a serious manner, the truculent examination of the executioner's eye. During this time a servant in the livery of the house of Guise brought in several arm-chairs, a table, and writing-materials.

"Begin the *procès verbal*," said Monsieur de Mon-trésor, motioning to the table the second personage, who was dressed in black, and was evidently a clerk. Then the provost went up to Christophe, and said to him in a very gentle way: "My friend, the chancellor, having learned that you refuse to answer me in a satisfactory manner, decrees that you be put to the question, ordinary and extraordinary."

"Is he in good health, and can he bear it?" said the clerk to the doctor.

"Yes," replied the latter, who was one of the physicians of the house of Lorraine.

"In that case, retire to the next room; we will send for you whenever we require your advice."

The physician left the hall.

His first terror having passed, Christophe rallied his courage; the hour of his martyrdom had come. Thenceforth he looked with cold curiosity at the arrangements that were made by the executioner and his men. After hastily preparing a bed, the two assistants got ready certain appliances called *boots*; which consisted of several planks, between which each leg of the victim was placed. The legs thus placed were brought close together. The apparatus used by binders to press their volumes between two boards, which they fasten by cords, will give an exact idea of the manner in which each leg of the prisoner was bound. We can imagine the effect produced by the insertion of wooden wedges, driven in by hammers between the planks of the two bound legs, — the two set of planks of course not yielding, being themselves bound together by ropes. These wedges were driven in on a line with the knees and the

ankles. The choice of these places where there is little flesh, and where, consequently, the wedge could only be forced in by crushing the bones, made this form of torture, called the "question," horribly painful. In the "ordinary question" four wedges were driven in,—two at the knees, two at the ankles; but in the "extraordinary question" the number was increased to eight, provided the doctor certified that the prisoner's vitality was not exhausted. At the time of which we write the "boots" were also applied in the same manner to the hands and wrists; but, being pressed for time, the cardinal, the lieutenant-general, and the chancellor spared Christophe that additional suffering.

The *procès verbal* was begun; the provost dictated a few sentences as he walked up and down with a meditative air, asking Christophe his name, baptismal name, age, and profession; then he inquired the name of the person from whom he had received the papers he had given to the queen.

"From the minister Chaudieu," answered Christophe.

"Where did he give them to you?"

"In Paris."

"In giving them to you he must have told you whether the queen-mother would receive you with pleasure?"

"He told me nothing of that kind," replied Christophe. "He merely asked me to give them to Queen Catherine secretly."

"You must have seen Chaudieu frequently, or he would not have known that you were going to Blois."

"The minister did not know from me that in carrying furs to the queen I was also to ask on my father's behalf

for the money the queen-mother owes him ; and I did not have time to ask the minister who had told him of it."

"But these papers, which were given to you without being sealed or enveloped, contained a treaty between the rebels and Queen Catherine. You must have seen that they exposed you to the punishment of all those who assist in a rebellion."

"Yes."

"The persons who persuaded you to this act of high treason must have promised you rewards and the protection of the queen-mother."

"I did it out of attachment to Chaudieu, the only person whom I saw in the matter."

"Do you persist in saying you did not see the Prince de Condé?"

"Yes."

"The Prince de Condé did not tell you that the queen-mother was inclined to enter into his views against the Messieurs de Guise?"

"I did not see him."

"Take care ! one of your accomplices, La Renaudie, has been arrested. Strong as he is, he was not able to bear the "question," which will now be put to you ; he confessed at last that both he and the Prince de Condé had an interview with you. If you wish to escape the torture of the question, I exhort you to tell me the simple truth. Perhaps you will thus obtain your full pardon."

Christophe answered that he could not state a thing of which he had no knowledge, or give himself accomplices when he had none. Hearing these words, the provost-marshal signed to the executioner and retired

himself to the inner room. At that fatal sign Christophe's brows contracted, his forehead worked with nervous convulsion, as he prepared himself to suffer. His hands closed with such violence that the nails entered the flesh without his feeling them. Three men seized him, took him to the camp bed and laid him there, letting his legs hang down. While the executioner fastened him to the rough bedstead with strong cords, the assistants bound his legs into the "boots." Presently the cords were tightened, by means of a wrench, without the pressure causing much pain to the young Reformer. When each leg was thus held as it were in a vice, the executioner grasped his hammer and picked up the wedges, looking alternately at the victim and at the clerk.

"Do you persist in your denial?" asked the clerk.

"I have told the truth," replied Christophe.

"Very well. Go on," said the clerk, closing his eyes.

The cords were tightened with great force. This was perhaps the most painful moment of the torture; the flesh being suddenly compressed, the blood rushed violently toward the breast. The poor boy could not restrain a dreadful cry and seemed about to faint. The doctor was called in. After feeling Christophe's pulse, he told the executioner to wait a quarter of an hour before driving the first wedge, to let the action of the blood subside and allow the victim to recover his full sensitiveness. The clerk suggested, kindly, that if he could not bear this beginning of sufferings which he could not escape, it would be better to reveal all at once; but Christophe made no reply except to say, "The king's tailor! the king's tailor!"

“What do you mean by those words?” asked the clerk.

“Seeing what torture I must bear,” said Christophe, slowly, hoping to gain time to rest, “I call up all my strength, and try to increase it by thinking of the martyrdom borne by the king’s tailor for the holy cause of the Reformation, when the question was applied to him in presence of Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois and the king. I shall try to be worthy of him.”

While the physician exhorted the unfortunate lad not to force them to have recourse to more violent measures, the cardinal and the duke, impatient to know the result of the interrogations, entered the hall and themselves asked Christophe to speak the truth, immediately. The young man repeated the only confession he had allowed himself to make, which implicated no one but Chaudieu. The princes made a sign, on which the executioner and his chief assistant seized their hammers, taking each a wedge, which they then drove in between the joints, standing one to right, the other to left of their victim; the executioner’s wedge was driven in at the knees, his assistant’s at the ankles.

The eyes of all present fastened on those of Christophe, and he, no doubt excited by the presence of those great personages, shot forth such burning glances that they appeared to have all the brilliancy of flame. As the third and fourth wedges were driven in, a dreadful groan escaped him. When he saw the executioner take up the wedges for the “extraordinary question” he said no word and made no sound, but his eyes took on so terrible a fixity, and he cast upon the two great princes who were watching him a glance so penetrating,

that the duke and cardinal were forced to drop their eyes. Philippe le Bel met with the same resistance when the torture of the pendulum was applied in his presence to the Templars. That punishment consisted in striking the victim on the breast with one arm of the balance-pole with which money is coined, its end being covered with a pad of leather. One of the knights thus tortured, looked so intently at the king that Philippe could not detach his eyes from him. At the third blow the king left the chamber on hearing the knight summon him to appear within a year before the judgment-seat of God, — as, in fact, he did. At the fifth blow, the first of the “extraordinary question,” Christophe said to the cardinal: “Monseigneur, put an end to my torture; it is useless.”

The cardinal and the duke re-entered the adjoining hall, and Christophe distinctly heard the following words said by Queen Catherine: “Go on; after all, he is only a heretic.”

She judged it prudent to be more stern to her accomplice than the executioners themselves.

The sixth and seventh wedges were driven in without a word of complaint from Christophe. His face shone with extraordinary brilliancy, due, no doubt, to the excess of strength which his fanatic devotion gave him. Where else but in the feelings of the soul can we find the power necessary to bear such sufferings? Finally, he smiled when he saw the executioner lifting the eighth and last wedge. This horrible torture had lasted by this time over an hour.

The clerk now went to call the physician that he might decide whether the eighth wedge could be driven

in without endangering the life of the victim. During this delay the duke returned to look at Christophe.

"*Ventre-de-biche!*" you are a fine fellow," he said to him, bending down to whisper the words. "I love brave men. Enter my service, and you shall be rich and happy; my favors shall heal those wounded limbs. I do not propose to you any baseness; I will not ask you to return to your party and betray its plans,—there are always traitors enough for that, and the proof is in the prisons of Blois; tell me only on what terms are the queen-mother and the Prince de Condé."

"I know nothing about it, monseigneur," replied Christophe Lecamus.

The physician came, examined the victim, and said that he could bear the eighth wedge.

"Then insert it," said the cardinal. "After all, as the queen says, he is only a heretic," he added, looking at Christophe with a dreadful smile.

At this moment Catherine came with slow steps from the adjoining apartment and stood before Christophe, coldly observing him. Instantly she was the object of the closest attention on the part of the two brothers, who watched alternately the queen and her accomplice. On this solemn test the whole future of that ambitious woman depended; she felt the keenest admiration for Christophe, yet she gazed sternly at him; she hated the Guises, and she smiled upon them!

"Young man," said the queen, "confess that you have seen the Prince de Condé, and you will be richly rewarded."

"Ah! what a business this is for you, madame!" cried Christophe, pitying her.

The queen quivered.

"He insults me!" she exclaimed. "Why do you not hang him?" she cried, turning to the two brothers, who stood thoughtful.

"What a woman!" said the duke in a glance at his brother, consulting him by his eye, and leading him to the window.

"I shall stay in France and be revenged upon them," thought the queen. "Come, make him confess, or let him die!" she said aloud, addressing Montrésor.

The provost-marshal turned away his eyes, the executioners were busy with the wedges; Catherine was free to cast one glance upon the martyr, unseen by others, which fell on Christophe like the dew. The eyes of the great queen seemed to him moist; two tears were in them, but they did not fall. The wedges were driven; a plank was broken by the blow. Christophe gave one dreadful cry, after which he was silent; his face shone, — he believed he was dying.

"Let him die?" said the cardinal, echoing the queen's last words with a sort of irony; "no, no! don't break that thread," he said to the provost.

The duke and the cardinal consulted together in a low voice.

"What is to be done with him?" asked the executioner.

"Send him to the prison at Orléans," said the duke, addressing Monsieur de Montrésor; "and don't hang him without my order."

The extreme sensitiveness to which Christophe's internal organism had been brought, increased by a resistance which called into play every power of the

human body, existed to the same degree, in his senses. He alone heard the following words whispered by the Duc de Guise in the ear of his brother the cardinal :

“ I don't give up all hope of getting the truth out of that little fellow yet.”

When the princes had left the hall the executioners unbound the legs of their victim roughly and without compassion.

“ Did any one ever see a criminal with such strength ?” said the chief executioner to his aids. “ The rascal bore that last wedge when he ought to have died ; I've lost the price of his body.”

“ Unbind me gently ; don't make me suffer, friends,” said poor Christophe. “ Some day I will reward you — ”

“ Come, come, show some humanity,” said the physician. “ Monseigneur esteems the young man, and told me to look after him.”

“ I am going to Amboise with my assistants, — take care of him yourself,” said the executioner, brutally. “ Besides, here comes the jailer.”

The executioner departed, leaving Christophe in the hands of the soft-spoken doctor, who by the aid of Christophe's future jailer, carried the poor boy to a bed, brought him some broth, helped him to swallow it, sat down beside him, felt his pulse, and tried to comfort him.

“ You won't die of this,” he said. “ You ought to feel great inward comfort, knowing that you have done your duty. — The queen-mother bids me take care of you,” he added in a whisper.

“ The queen is very good,” said Christophe, whose

terrible sufferings had developed an extraordinary lucidity in his mind, and who, after enduring such unspeakable sufferings, was determined not to compromise the results of his devotion. "But she might have spared me such agony by telling my persecutors herself the secrets that I know nothing about, instead of urging them on."

Hearing that reply, the doctor took his cap and cloak and left Christophe, rightly judging that he could worm nothing out of a man of that stamp. The jailer of Blois now ordered the poor lad to be carried away on a stretcher by four men, who took him to the prison in the town, where Christophe immediately fell into the deep sleep which, they say, comes to most mothers after the terrible pangs of childbirth.

IX.

THE TUMULT AT AMBOISE.

By moving the court to the château of Amboise, the two Lorrain princes intended to set a trap for the leader of the party of the Reformation, the Prince de Condé, whom they had made the king summon to his presence. As vassal of the Crown and prince of the blood, Condé was bound to obey the summons of his sovereign. Not to come to Amboise would constitute the crime of treason ; but if he came, he put himself in the power of the Crown. Now, at this moment, as we have seen, the Crown, the council, the court, and all their powers were solely in the hands of the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine. The Prince de Condé showed, at this delicate crisis, a presence of mind and a decision and wiliness which made him the worthy exponent of Jeanne d'Albret and the valorous general of the Reformers. He travelled at the rear of the conspirators as far as Vendôme, intending to support them in case of their success. When the first uprising ended by a brief skirmish, in which the flower of the nobility beguiled by Calvin perished, the prince arrived, with fifty noblemen, at the château of Amboise on the very day after that fight, which the politic Guises termed "the Tumult of Amboise." As soon as the duke and cardinal heard of his coming they sent the

Maréchal de Saint-André with an escort of a hundred men to meet him. When the prince and his own escort reached the gates of the château the maréchal refused entrance to the latter.

"You must enter alone, monseigneur," said the Chancellor Olivier, the Cardinal de Tournon, and Birago, who were stationed outside of the portcullis.

"And why?"

"You are suspected of treason," replied the chancellor.

The prince, who saw that his suite were already surrounded by the troop of the Duc de Nemours, replied tranquilly: "If that is so, I will go alone to my cousin, and prove to him my innocence."

He dismounted, talked with perfect freedom of mind to Birago, the Cardinal de Tournon, the chancellor, and the Duc de Nemours, from whom he asked for particulars of the "tumult."

"Monseigneur," replied the duke, "the rebels had confederates in Amboise. A captain, named Lanoue, had introduced armed men, who opened the gate to them, through which they entered and made themselves masters of the town —"

"That is to say, you opened the mouth of a sack, and they ran into it," replied the prince, looking at Birago.

"If they had been supported by the attack which Captain Chaudieu, the preacher's brother, was expected to make before the gate of the Bon-Hommes, they would have been completely successful," replied the Duc de Nemours. "But in consequence of the position which the Duc de Guise ordered me to take up, Captain

Chandieu was obliged to turn my flank to avoid a fight. So instead of arriving by night, like the rest, this rebel and his men got there at daybreak, by which time the king's troops had crushed the invaders of the town."

"And you had a reserve force to recover the gate which had been opened to them?" said the prince.

"Monsieur le Maréchal de Saint-André was there with five hundred men-at-arms."

The prince gave the highest praise to these military arrangements.

"The lieutenant-general must have been fully aware of the plans of the Reformers, to have acted as he did," he said in conclusion. "They were no doubt betrayed."

The prince was treated with increasing harshness. After separating him from his escort at the gates, the cardinal and the chancellor barred his way when he reached the staircase which led to the apartments of the king.

"We are directed by his Majesty, monseigneur, to take you to your own apartments," they said.

"Am I, then, a prisoner?"

"If that were the king's intention you would not be accompanied by a prince of the Church, nor by me," replied the chancellor.

These two personages escorted the prince to an apartment, where guards of honor — so-called — were given him. There he remained, without seeing any one, for some hours. From his window he looked down upon the Loire and the meadows of the beautiful valley stretching from Amboise to Tours. He was reflecting on the situation, and asking himself whether the Guises

would really dare anything against his person, when the door of his chamber opened and Chicot, the king's fool, formerly a dependant of his own, entered the room.

"They told me you were in disgrace," said the prince.

"You'd never believe how virtuous the court has become since the death of Henri II."

"But the king loves a laugh."

"Which king, — François II., or François de Lorraine?"

"You are not afraid of the duke, if you talk in that way!"

"He wouldn't punish me for it, monseigneur," replied Chicot, laughing.

"To what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Hey! Is n't it due to you on your return? I bring you my cap and bells."

"Can I go out?"

"Try."

"Suppose I do go out, what then?"

"I should say that you had won the game by playing against the rules."

"Chicot, you alarm me. Are you sent here by some one who takes an interest in me?"

"Yes," said Chicot, nodding. He came nearer to the prince, and made him understand that they were being watched and overheard.

"What have you to say to me?" asked the Prince de Condé, in a low voice.

"Boldness alone can pull you out of this scrape; the message comes from the queen-mother," replied the fool, slipping his words into the ear of the prince.

"Tell those who sent you," replied Condé, "that I should not have entered this château if I had anything to reproach myself with, or to fear."

"I rush to report that lofty answer!" cried the fool.

Two hours later, that is, about one o'clock in the afternoon, before the king's dinner, the chancellor and Cardinal de Tournon came to fetch the prince and present him to Francois II. in the great gallery of the château of Amboise, where the councils were held. There, before the whole court, Condé pretended surprise at the coldness with which the little king received him, and asked the reason of it.

"You are accused, cousin," said the queen-mother, sternly, "of taking part in the conspiracy of the Reformers; and you must prove yourself a faithful subject and a good Catholic, if you do not desire to draw down upon your house the anger of the king."

Hearing these words said, in the midst of the most profound silence, by Catherine de' Medici, on whose right arm the king was leaning, the Duc d'Orléans being on her left side, the Prince de Condé recoiled three steps, laid his hand on his sword with a proud motion, and looked at all the persons who surrounded him.

"Those who said that, madame," he cried in an angry voice, "lied in their throats!"

Then he flung his glove at the king's feet, saying: "Let him who believes that calumny come forward!"

The whole court trembled as the Duc de Guise was seen to leave his place; but instead of picking up the glove, he advanced to the intrepid hunchback.

"If you desire a second in that duel, monseigneur,

do me the honor to accept my services," he said. "I will answer for you; I know that you will show the Reformers how mistaken they are if they think to have you for their leader."

The prince was forced to take the hand of the lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Chicot picked up the glove and returned it to Monsieur de Condé.

"Cousin," said the little king, "you must draw your sword only for the defence of the kingdom. Come and dine."

The Cardinal de Lorraine, surprised at his brother's action, drew him away to his own apartments. The Prince de Condé, having escaped his apparent danger, offered his hand to Mary Stuart to lead her to the dining hall; but all the while that he made her flattering speeches he pondered in his mind what trap the astute Balafre was setting for him. In vain he worked his brains, for it was not until Queen Mary herself betrayed it, that he guessed the intention of the Guises.

"'T would have been a great pity," she said laughing, "if so clever a head had fallen; you must admit that my uncle has been generous."

"Yes, madame; for my head is only useful on my shoulders, though one of them is notoriously higher than the other. But is this really your uncle's generosity? Is he not getting the credit of it rather cheaply? Do you think it would be so easy to take off the head of a prince of the blood?"

"All is not over yet," she said. "We shall see what your conduct will be at the execution of the noblemen, your friends, at which the Council has decided to make a great public display of severity."

"I shall do," said the prince, "whatever the king does."

"The king, the queen-mother, and myself will be present at the execution, together with the whole court and the ambassadors —"

"A fête!" said the prince, sarcastically.

"Better than that," said the young queen, "an *act of faith*, an act of the highest policy. 'Tis a question of forcing the noblemen of France to submit themselves to the Crown, and compelling them to give up their tastes for plots and factions —"

"You will not break their belligerent tempers by the show of danger, madame; you will risk the Crown itself in the attempt," replied the prince.

At the end of the dinner, which was gloomy enough, Queen Mary had the cruel boldness to turn the conversation openly upon the trial of the noblemen on the charge of being seized with arms in their hands, and to speak of the necessity of making a great public show of their execution.

"Madame," said François II., "is it not enough for the king of France to know that so much brave blood is to flow? Must he make a triumph of it?"

"No, sire; but an example," replied Catherine.

"It was the custom of your father and your grandfather to be present at the burning of heretics," said Mary Stuart.

"The kings who reigned before me did as they thought best, and I choose to do as I please," said the little king.

"Philip the Second," remarked Catherine, "who is certainly a great king, lately postponed an *auto da*

fé until he could return from the Low Countries to Valladolid."

"What do you think, cousin?" said the king to Prince de Condé.

"Sire, you cannot avoid it, and the papal nuncio and all the ambassadors should be present. I shall go willingly, as these ladies take part in the fête."

Thus the Prince de Condé, at a glance from Catherine de' Medici, bravely chose his course.

At the moment when the Prince de Condé was entering the château d'Amboise, Lecamus, the furrier of the two queens, was also arriving from Paris, brought to Amboise by the anxiety into which the news of the tumult had thrown both his family and that of Lallier. When the old man presented himself at the gate of the château, the captain of the guard, on hearing that he was the queens' furrier, said:—

"My good man, if you want to be hanged you have only to set foot in this courtyard."

Hearing these words, the father, in despair, sat down on a stone at a little distance and waited until some retainer of the two queens or some servant-woman might pass who would give him news of his son. But he sat there all day without seeing any one whom he knew, and was forced at last to go down into the town, where he found, not without some difficulty, a lodging in a hostelry on the public square where the executions took place. He was obliged to pay a pound a day to obtain a room with a window looking on the square. The next day he had the courage to watch, from his window, the execution of all the abettors of the rebel-

lion who were condemned to be broken on the wheel or hanged, as persons of little importance. He was happy indeed not to see his own son among the victims.

When the execution was over he went into the square and put himself in the way of the clerk of the court. After giving his name, and slipping a purse full of crowns into the man's hand, he begged him to look on the records and see if the name of Christophe Lecamus appeared in either of the three preceding executions. The clerk, touched by the manner and the tones of the despairing father, took him to his own house. After a careful search he was able to give the old man an absolute assurance that Christophe was not among the persons thus far executed, nor among those who were to be put to death within a few days.

"My dear man," said the clerk, "Parliament has taken charge of the trial of the great lords implicated in the affair, and also that of the principal leaders. Perhaps your son is detained in the prisons of the château, and he may be brought forth for the magnificent execution which their Excellencies the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine are now preparing. The heads of twenty-seven barons, eleven counts, and seven marquises, — in all, fifty noblemen or leaders of the Reformers, — are to be cut off. As the justiciary of the county of Touraine is quite distinct from that of the parliament of Paris, if you are determined to know about your son, I advise you to go and see the Chancellor Olivier, who has the management of this great trial under orders from the lieutenant-general of the kingdom."

The poor old man, acting on this advice, went three

times to see the chancellor, standing in a long queue of persons waiting to ask mercy for their friends. But as the titled men were made to pass before the burghers, he was obliged to give up the hope of speaking to the chancellor, though he saw him several times leave the house to go either to the château or to the committee appointed by the Parliament, — passing each time between a double hedge of petitioners who were kept back by the guards to allow him free passage. It was a horrible scene of anguish and desolation; for among these petitioners were many women, wives, mothers, daughters, whole families in distress. Old Lecamus gave much gold to the footmen of the château, entreating them to put certain letters which he wrote into the hand either of Dayelle, Queen Mary's woman, or into that of the queen-mother; but the footmen took the poor man's money and carried the letters, according to the general order of the cardinal, to the provost-marshal. By displaying such unheard-of cruelty the Guises knew that they incurred great dangers from revenge, and never did they take such precautions for their safety as they did while the court was at Amboise; consequently, neither the greatest of all corrupters, gold, nor the incessant and active search which the old furrier instituted gave him the slightest gleam of light on the fate of his son. He went about the little town with a mournful air, watching the great preparations made by order of the cardinal for the dreadful show at which the Prince de Condé had agreed to be present.

Public curiosity was stimulated from Paris to Nantes by the means adopted on this occasion. The execution

was announced from all pulpits by the rectors of the churches, while at the same time they gave thanks for the victory of the king over the heretics. Three handsome balconies, the middle one more sumptuous than the other two, were built against the terrace of the château of Amboise, at the foot of which the executions were appointed to take place. Around the open square, stagings were erected, and these were filled with an immense crowd of people attracted by the wide-spread notoriety given to this "act of faith." Ten thousand persons camped in the adjoining fields the night before the day on which the horrible spectacle was appointed to take place. The roofs of the houses were crowded with spectators, and windows were let at ten pounds apiece, — an enormous sum in those days. The poor old father had engaged, as we may well believe, one of the best places from which the eye could take in the whole of the terrible scene, where so many men of noble blood were to perish on a vast scaffold covered with black cloth, erected in the middle of the open square. Thither, on the morning of the fatal day, they brought the *chouquet*, — a name given to the block on which the condemned man laid his head as he knelt before it. After this they brought an arm-chair draped with black, for the clerk of the Parliament, whose business it was to call up the condemned noblemen to their death and read their sentences. The whole square was guarded from early morning by the Scottish guard and the gendarmes of the king's household, in order to keep back the crowd which threatened to fill it before the hour of the execution.

After a solemn mass said at the château and in the

churches of the town, the condemned lords, the last of the conspirators who were left alive, were led out. These gentlemen, some of whom had been put to the torture, were grouped at the foot of the scaffold and surrounded by monks, who endeavored to make them abjure the doctrines of Calvin. But not a single man listened to the words of the priests who had been appointed for this duty by the Cardinal of Lorraine; among whom the gentlemen no doubt feared to find spies of the Guises. In order to avoid the importunity of these antagonists they chanted a psalm, put into French verse by Clement Marot. Calvin, as we all know, had ordained that prayers to God should be in the language of each country, as much from a principle of common-sense as in opposition to the Roman worship. To those in the crowd who pitied these unfortunate gentlemen it was a moving incident to hear them chant the following verse at the very moment when the king and court arrived and took their places: —

“God be merciful unto us,
And bless us!
And show us the light of his countenance,
And be merciful unto us.”

The eyes of all the Reformers turned to their leader, the Prince de Condé, who was placed intentionally between Queen Mary and the young Duc d'Orléans. Catherine de' Medici was beside the king, and the rest of the court were on her left. The papal nuncio stood behind Queen Mary; the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, the Duc de Guise, was on horseback below the

balcony, with two of the marshals of France and his staff captains. When the Prince de Condé appeared all the condemned noblemen who knew him bowed to him, and the brave hunchback returned their salutation.

"It would be hard," he remarked to the Duc d'Orléans, "not to be civil to those about to die."

The two other balconies were filled by invited guests, courtiers, and persons on duty about the court. In short, the whole company of the château de Blois had come to Amboise to assist at this festival of death, precisely as it passed, a little later, from the pleasures of a court to the perils of war, with an easy facility, which will always seem to foreigners one of the main supports of their policy toward France.

The poor syndic of the furriers of Paris was filled with the keenest joy at not seeing his son among the fifty-seven gentlemen who were condemned to die.

At a sign from the Duc de Guise, the clerk seated on the scaffold cried in a loud voice : —

"Jean-Louis-Albéric, Baron de Raunay, guilty of heresy, of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, and assault with armed hand against the person of the king."

A tall handsome man mounted the scaffold with a firm step, bowed to the people and the court, and said :

"That sentence lies. I took arms to deliver the king from his enemies, the Guises."

He placed his head on the block, and it fell. The Reformers chanted : —

"Thou, O God ! hast proved us ;
Thou hast tried us ;
As silver is tried in the fire,
So hast thou purified us."

“Robert-Jean-René Briquemaut, Comte de Ville-mongis, guilty of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, and of attempts against the person of the king!” called the clerk.

The count dipped his hands in the blood of the Baron de Raunay, and said:—

“May this blood recoil upon those who are really guilty of those crimes.”

The Reformers chanted:—

“Thou broughtest us into the snare;
Thou laidest affliction upon our loins;
Thou hast suffered our enemies
To ride over us.”

“You must admit, monseigneur,” said the Prince de Condé to the papal nuncio, “that if these French gentlemen know how to conspire, they also know how to die.”

“What hatreds, brother!” whispered the Duchesse de Guise to the Cardinal de Lorraine, “you are drawing down upon the heads of our children!”

“The sight makes me sick,” said the young king, turning pale at the flow of blood.

“Pooh! only rebels!” replied Catherine de' Medici.

The chants went on; the axe still fell. The sublime spectacle of men singing as they died, and, above all, the impression produced upon the crowd by the progressive diminution of the chanting voices, superseded the fear inspired by the Guises.

“Mercy!” cried the people with one voice, when they heard the solitary chant of the last and most important of the great lords, who was saved to be the

final victim. He alone remained at the foot of the steps by which the others had mounted the scaffold, and he chanted : —

“Thou, O God, be merciful unto us,
And bless us.
And cause thy face to shine upon us.
Amen !”

“Come, Duc de Nemours,” said the Prince de Condé, weary of the part he was playing ; “you who have the credit of the skirmish, and who helped to make these men prisoners, do you not feel under an obligation to ask mercy for this one? It is Castelnau, who, they say, received your word of honor that he should be courteously treated if he surrendered.”

“Do you think I waited till he was here before trying to save him?” said the Duc de Nemours, stung by the stern reproach.

The clerk called slowly — no doubt he was intentionally slow : —

“Michel-Jean-Louis, Baron de Castelnau-Chalosse, accused and convicted of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, and of attempts against the person of the king.”

“No,” said Castelnau, proudly, “it cannot be a crime to oppose the tyranny and the projected usurpation of the Guises.”

The executioner, sick of his task, saw a movement in the king's gallery, and fumbled with his axe.

“Monsieur le baron,” he said, “I do not want to execute you ; a moment's delay may save you.”

All the people again cried, “Mercy !”

“Come !” said the king, “mercy for that poor Castelnau, who saved the life of the Duc d'Orléans.”

The cardinal intentionally misunderstood the king's speech.

"Go on," he motioned to the executioner, and the head of Castelnau fell at the very moment when the king had pronounced his pardon.

"That head, cardinal, goes to your account," said Catherine de' Medici.

The day after this dreadful execution the Prince de Condé returned to Navarre.

The affair produced a great sensation in France and at all the foreign courts. The torrents of noble blood then shed caused such anguish to the chancellor Olivier that his honorable mind, perceiving at last the real end and aim of the Guises disguised under a pretext of defending religion and the monarchy, felt itself no longer able to make head against them. Though he was their creature, he was not willing to sacrifice his duty and the Throne to their ambition; and he withdrew from his post, suggesting l'Hôpital as his rightful successor. Catherine, hearing of Olivier's suggestion, immediately proposed Birago, and put much warmth into her request. The cardinal, knowing nothing of the letter written by l'Hôpital to the queen-mother, and supposing him faithful to the house of Lorraine, pressed his appointment in opposition to that of Birago, and Catherine allowed herself to seem vanquished. From the moment that l'Hôpital entered upon his duties he took measures against the Inquisition, which the Cardinal de Lorraine was desirous of introducing into France; and he thwarted so successfully all the anti-gallican policy of the Guises, and proved himself so true a Frenchman, that in order to subdue him he was

“ ‘ Go away, my good man, and let no one see you
speak to me.’ ”



J. WAGREZ.

J. Wagrez

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exiled, within three months of his appointment, to his country-seat of Vignay, near Étampes.

The worthy old Lecamus waited impatiently till the court left Amboise, being unable to find an opportunity to speak to either of the queens, and hoping to put himself in their way as the court advanced along the river-bank on its return to Blois. He disguised himself as a pauper, at the risk of being taken for a spy, and by means of this travesty, he mingled with the crowd of beggars which lined the roadway. After the departure of the Prince de Condé, and the execution of the leaders, the duke and cardinal thought they had sufficiently silenced the Reformers to allow the queen-mother a little more freedom. Lecamus knew that, instead of travelling in a litter, Catherine intended to go on horseback, *à la planchette*, — such was the name given to a sort of stirrup invented for or by the queen-mother, who, having hurt her leg on some occasion, ordered a velvet-covered saddle with a plank on which she could place both feet by sitting sideways on the horse and passing one leg through a depression in the saddle. As the queen-mother had very handsome legs, she was accused of inventing this method of riding, in order to show them. The old furrier fortunately found a moment when he could present himself to her sight; but the instant that the queen recognized him she gave signs of displeasure.

“Go away, my good man, and let no one see you speak to me,” she said with anxiety. “Get yourself elected deputy to the States-general, by the guild of your trade, and act for me when the Assembly convenes at Orléans; you shall know whom to trust in the matter of your son.”

"Is he living?" asked the old man.

"Alas!" said the queen, "I hope so."

Lecamus was obliged to return to Paris with nothing better than those doubtful words and the secret of the approaching convocation of the States-general, thus confided to him by the queen-mother.

X.

COSMO RUGGIERO.

THE Cardinal de Lorraine obtained, within a few days of the events just related, certain revelations as to the culpability of the court of Navarre. At Lyon, and at Mouvans in Dauphiné, a body of Reformers, under command of the most enterprising prince of the house of Bourbon had endeavored to incite the populace to rise. Such audacity, after the bloody executions at Amboise, astonished the Guises, who (no doubt to put an end to heresy by means known only to themselves) proposed the convocation of the States-general at Orléans. Catherine de' Medici, seeing a chance of support to her policy in a national representation, joyfully agreed to it. The cardinal, bent on recovering his prey and degrading the house of Bourbon, convoked the States for the sole purpose of bringing the Prince de Condé and the king of Navarre (Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri IV.) to Orléans, — intending to make use of Christophe to convict the prince of high treason if he succeeded in again getting him within the power of the Crown.

After two months passed in the prison at Blois, Christophe was removed on a litter to a tow-boat, which sailed up the Loire to Orléans, helped by a westerly wind. He arrived there in the evening and was taken at once to the celebrated tower of Saint-Aignan. The poor lad,

who did not know what to think of his removal, had plenty of time to reflect on his conduct and on his future. He remained there two months, lying on his pallet, unable to move his legs. The bones of his joints were broken. When he asked for the help of a surgeon from the town, the jailer replied that the orders were so strict about him that he dared not allow any one but himself even to bring him food. This severity, which placed him virtually in solitary confinement, amazed Christophe. To his mind, he ought either to be hanged or released; for he was, of course, entirely ignorant of the events at Amboise.

In spite of certain secret advice sent to them by Catherine de' Medici, the two chiefs of the house of Bourbon resolved to be present at the States-general, so completely did the autograph letters they received from the king reassure them; and no sooner had the court established itself at Orléans than it learned, not without amazement, from Groslot, chancellor of Navarre, that the Bourbon princes had arrived.

François II. established himself in the house of the chancellor of Navarre, who was also *bailli*, in other words, chief justice of the law courts, at Orléans. This Groslot, whose dual position was one of the singularities of this period — when Reformers themselves owned abbeys — Groslot, the Jacques Cœur of Orléans, one of the richest burghers of the day, did not bequeath his name to the house, for in after years it was called Le Bailliage, having been, undoubtedly, purchased either by the heirs of the Crown or by the provinces as the proper place in which to hold the legal courts. This charming structure, built by the bourgeoisie of the six-

teenth century, which completes so admirably the history of a period in which king, nobles, and burghers rivalled each other in the grace, elegance, and richness of their dwellings (witness Varangeville, the splendid manor-house of Ango, and the mansion, called that of Hercules, in Paris), exists to this day, though in a state to fill archæologists and lovers of the Middle Ages with despair. It would be difficult, however, to go to Orléans and not take notice of the Hôtel-de-Ville which stands on the place de l'Estepé. This hôtel-de-ville, or town-hall, is the former Balliage, the mansion of Groslot, the most illustrious house in Orléans, and the most neglected.

The remains of this old building will still show, to the eyes of an archæologist, how magnificent it was at a period when the houses of the burghers were commonly built of wood rather than stone, a period when noblemen alone had the right to build *manors*, — a significant word. Having served as the dwelling of the king at a period when the court displayed such pomp and luxury, the hôtel Groslot must have been the most splendid house in Orléans. It was here, on the place de l'Estepé, that the Guises and the king reviewed the burgher guard, of which Monsieur de Cypierre was made the commander during the sojourn of the king. At this period the cathedral of Sainte-Croix, afterward completed by Henri IV., — who chose to give that proof of the sincerity of his conversion, — was in process of erection, and its neighborhood, heaped with stones and cumbered with piles of wood, was occupied by the Guises and their retainers, who were quartered in the bishop's palace, now destroyed.

The town was under military discipline, and the measures taken by the Guises proved how little liberty they intended to leave to the States-general, the members of which flocked into the town, raising the rents of the poorest lodgings. The court, the burgher militia, the nobility, and the burghers themselves were all in a state of expectation, awaiting some *coup-d'État*; and they found themselves not mistaken when the princes of the blood arrived. As the Bourbon princes entered the king's chamber, the court saw with terror the insolent bearing of Cardinal de Lorraine. Determined to show his intentions openly, he remained covered, while the king of Navarre stood before him bare-headed. Catherine de' Medici lowered her eyes, not to show the indignation that she felt. Then followed a solemn explanation between the young king and the two chiefs of the younger branch. It was short, for at the first words of the Prince de Condé François II. interrupted him, with threatening looks :

"Messieurs, my cousins, I had supposed the affair of Amboise over; I find it is not so, and you are compelling us to regret the indulgence which we showed."

"It is not the king so much as the Messieurs de Guise who now address us," replied the Prince de Condé.

"Adieu, monsieur," cried the little king, crimson with anger. When he left the king's presence the prince found his way barred in the great hall by two officers of the Scottish guard. As the captain of the French guard advanced, the prince drew a letter from his doublet, and said to him in presence of the whole court : —

"Can you read that paper aloud to me, Monsieur de Maillé-Brézé?"

"Willingly," said the French captain: —

"My cousin, come in all security; I give you my royal word that you can do so. If you have need of a safe conduct, this letter will serve as one."

"Signed?" said the shrewd and courageous hunchback.

"Signed 'François,'" said Maillé.

"No, no!" exclaimed the prince, "it is signed: 'Your good cousin and friend, François.' — Messieurs," he said to the Scotch guard, "I follow you to the prison to which you are ordered, on behalf of the king, to conduct me. There is enough nobility in this hall to understand the matter!"

The profound silence which followed these words ought to have enlightened the Guises, but silence is that to which all princes listen least.

"Monseigneur," said the Cardinal de Tournon, who was following the prince, "you know well that since the affair at Amboise you have made certain attempts both at Lyon and at Mouvans in Dauphiné against the royal authority, of which the king had no knowledge when he wrote to you in those terms."

"Tricksters!" cried the prince, laughing.

"You have made a public declaration against the Mass and in favor of heresy."

"We are masters in Navarre," said the prince.

"You mean to say in Béarn. But you owe homage to the Crown," replied President de Thou.

"Ha! you here, president?" cried the prince, sarcastically. "Is the whole Parliament with you?"

So saying, he cast a look of contempt upon the cardinal and left the hall. He saw plainly enough that they meant to have his head. The next day, when Messieurs de Thou, de Viole, d'Espesse, the procureur-général Bourdin, and the chief clerk of the court du Tillet, entered his presence, he kept them standing, and expressed his regrets to see them charged with a duty which did not belong to them. Then he said to the clerk, "Write down what I say," and dictated as follows:—

"I, Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, peer of the kingdom, Marquis de Conti, Comte de Soissons, prince of the blood of France, do declare that I formally refuse to recognize any commission appointed to try me, because, in my quality and in virtue of the privilege appertaining to all members of the royal house, I can only be accused, tried, and judged by the Parliament of peers, both Chambers assembled, the king being seated on his bed of justice."

"You ought to know that, gentlemen, better than others," he added; "and this reply is all that you will get from me. For the rest, I trust in God and my right."

The magistrates continued to address him notwithstanding his obstinate silence. The king of Navarre was left at liberty, but closely watched; his prison was larger than that of the prince, and this was the only real difference in the position of the two brothers, — the intention being that their heads should fall together.

Christophe was therefore kept in the strictest solitary confinement by order of the cardinal and the lieutenant-general of the kingdom, for no other purpose than to

give the judges proof of the culpability of the Prince de Condé. The letters seized on Lasagne, the prince's secretary, though intelligible to statesmen, were not sufficiently plain proof for judges. The cardinal intended to confront the prince and Christophe by accident; and it was not without intention that the young Reformer was placed in one of the lower rooms in the tower of Saint-Aignan, with a window looking on the prison yard. Each time that Christophe was brought before the magistrates, and subjected to a close examination, he sheltered himself behind a total and complete denial, which prolonged his trial until after the opening of the States-general.

Old Lecamus, who by that time had got himself elected deputy of the *tiers-état* by the burghers of Paris, arrived at Orléans a few days after the arrest of the Prince de Condé. This news, which reached him at Étampes, redoubled his anxiety; for he fully understood — he, who alone knew of Christophe's interview with the prince under the bridge near his own house — that his son's fate was closely bound up with that of the leader of the Reformed party. He therefore determined to study the dark tangle of interests which were struggling together at court in order to discover some means of rescuing his son. It was useless to think of Queen Catherine, who refused to see her furrier. No one about the court whom he was able to address could give him any satisfactory information about Christophe; and he fell at last into a state of such utter despair that he was on the verge of appealing to the cardinal himself, when he learned that Monsieur de Thou (and this was the great stain upon that good man's life) had

consented to be one of the judges of the Prince de Condé. The old furrier went at once to see him, and learned at last that Christophe was still living, though a prisoner.

Tourillon, the glover (to whom La Renaudie sent Christophe on his way to Blois), had offered a room in his house to the Sieur Lecamus for the whole time of his stay in Orléans during the sittings of the States-general. The glover believed the furrier to be, like himself, secretly attached to the Reformed religion; but he soon saw that a father who fears for the life of his child pays no heed to shades of religious opinion, but flings himself prone upon the bosom of God without caring what insignia men give to Him. The poor old man, repulsed in all his efforts, wandered like one bewildered through the streets. Contrary to his expectations, his money availed him nothing; Monsieur de Thou had warned him that if he bribed any servant of the house of Guise he would merely lose his money, for the duke and cardinal allowed nothing that related to Christophe to transpire. De Thou, whose fame is somewhat tarnished by the part he played at this crisis, endeavored to give some hope to the poor father; but he trembled so much himself for the fate of his godson that his attempts at consolation only alarmed the old man still more. Lecamus roamed the streets; in three months he had shrunk visibly. His only hope now lay in the warm friendship which for so many years had bound him to the Hippocrates of the sixteenth century. Ambroise Paré tried to say a word to Queen Mary on leaving the chamber of the king, who was then indisposed; but no sooner had he named Christophe than

the daughter of the Stuarts, nervous at the prospect of her fate should any evil happen to the king, and believing that the Reformers were attempting to poison him, cried out: —

“If my uncles had only listened to me, that fanatic would have been hanged already.”

The evening on which this fatal answer was repeated to old Lecamus, by his friend Paré on the place de l'Estate, he returned home half dead to his own chamber, refusing to eat any supper. Tourillon, uneasy about him, went up to his room and found him in tears; the aged eyes showed the inflamed red lining of their lids, so that the glover fancied for a moment that he was weeping tears of blood.

“Comfort yourself, father,” said the Reformer; “the burghers of Orléans are furious to see their city treated as though it were taken by assault, and guarded by the soldiers of Monsieur de Cypierre. If the life of the Prince de Condé is in any real danger we will soon demolish the tower of Saint-Aignan; the whole town is on the side of the Reformers, and it will rise in rebellion; you may be sure of that!”

“But, even if they hang the Guises, it will not give me back my son,” said the wretched father.

At that instant some one rapped cautiously on Tourillon's outer door, and the glover went downstairs to open it himself. The night was dark. In these troublous times the masters of all households took minute precautions. Tourillon looked through the peep-holes cut in the door, and saw a stranger, whose accent indicated an Italian. The man, who was dressed in black, asked to speak with Lecamus on matters of

business, and Tourillon admitted him. When the furrer caught sight of his visitor he shuddered violently; but the stranger managed, unseen by Tourillon, to lay his finger on his lips. Lecamus, understanding the gesture, said immediately: —

“You have come, I suppose, to offer furs?”

“*Si*,” said the Italian, discreetly.

This personage was no other than the famous Ruggerio, astrologer to the queen-mother. Tourillon went below to his own apartment, feeling convinced that he was one too many in that of his guest.

“Where can we talk without danger of being overheard?” said the cautious Florentine.

“We ought to be in the open fields for that,” replied Lecamus. “But we are not allowed to leave the town; you know the severity with which the gates are guarded. No one can leave Orléans without a pass from Monsieur de Cypierre,” he added, — “not even I, who am a member of the States-general. Complaint is to be made at to-morrow’s session of this restriction of liberty.”

“Work like a mole, but don’t let your paws be seen in anything, no matter what,” said the wary Italian. “To-morrow will, no doubt, prove a decisive day. Judging by my observations, you may, perhaps, recover your son to-morrow, or the day after.”

“May God hear you — you who are thought to traffic with the devil!”

“Come to my place,” said the astrologer, smiling. “I live in the tower of *Sieur Touchet de Beauvais*, the lieutenant of the *Bailliage*, whose daughter the little Duc d’Orléans has taken such a fancy to; it is there that I observe the planets. I have drawn the girl’s horo-

scope, and it says that she will become a great lady and be beloved by a king. The lieutenant, her father, is a clever man; he loves science, and the queen sent me to lodge with him. Hê has had the sense to be a rabid Guisist while awaiting the reign of Charles IX."

The furrier and the astrologer reached the house of the Sieur de Beauvais without being met or even seen; but, in case Lecamus' visit should be discovered, the Florentine intended to give the pretext of an astrological consultation on his son's fate. When they were safely at the top of the tower, where the astrologer did his work, Lecamus said to him:—

"Is my son really living?"

"Yes, he still lives," replied Ruggiero; "and the question now is how to save him. Remember this, seller of skins, I would not give two farthings for yours if ever in all your life a single syllable should escape you of what I am about to say."

"That is a useless caution, my friend; I have been furrier to the court since the time of the late Louis XII.; this is the fourth reign that I have seen."

"And you may soon say the fifth," remarked Ruggiero.

"What do you know about my son?"

"He has been put to the question."

"Poor boy!" said the old man, raising his eyes to heaven.

"His knees and ankles were a bit injured, but he has won a royal protection which will extend over his whole life," said the Florentine hastily, seeing the terror of the poor father. "Your little Christophe has done a service to our great queen Catherine. If we

manage to pull him out of the claws of the Guises you will see him some day councillor to the Parliament. Any man would gladly have his bones cracked three times over to stand so high in the good graces of this dear sovereign, — a grand and noble genius, who will triumph in the end over all obstacles. I have drawn the horoscope of the Duc de Guise; he will be killed within a year. Well, so Christophe saw the Prince de Condé —”

“ You who read the future ought to know the past,” said the furrier.

“ My good man, I am not questioning you, I am telling you a fact. Now, if your son, who will to-morrow be placed in the prince's way as he passes, should recognize him, or if the prince should recognize your son, the head of Monsieur de Condé will fall. God knows what will become of his accomplice! However, don't be alarmed. Neither your son nor the prince will die; I have drawn their horoscope, — they will live; but I do not know in what way they will get out of this affair. Without distrusting the certainty of my calculations, we must do something to bring about results. To-morrow the prince will receive, from sure hands, a prayer-book in which we convey the information to him. God grant that your son be cautious, for him we cannot warn. A single glance of recognition will cost the prince's life. Therefore, although the queen-mother has every reason to trust in Christophe's faithfulness — ”

“ They've put it to a cruel test!” cried the furrier.

“ Don't speak so! Do you think the queen-mother is on a bed of roses? She is taking measures as if the Guises had already decided on the death of the prince;

and right she is, the wise and prudent queen! Now listen to me; she counts on you to help her in all things. You have some influence with the *tiers-état*, where you represent the body of the guilds of Paris, and though the Guisards may promise you to set your son at liberty, try to fool them and maintain the independence of the guilds. Demand the queen-mother as regent; the king of Navarre will publicly accept the proposal at the session of the States-general.

"But the king?" said Lecamus.

"The king will die," replied Ruggiero; "I have read his horoscope. What the queen-mother requires you to do for her at the States-general is a very simple thing; but there is a far greater service which she asks of you. You helped Ambroise Paré in his studies, you are his friend —"

"Ambroise now loves the Duc de Guise more than he loves me; and he is right, for he owes his place to him. Besides, he is faithful to the king. Though he inclines to the Reformed religion, he will never do anything against his duty."

"Curse these honest men!" cried the Florentine. "Ambroise boasted this evening that he could bring the little king safely through his present illness (for he is really ill). If the king recovers his health, the Guises triumph, the princes die, the house of Bourbon becomes extinct, we shall return to Florence, your son will be hanged, and the Lorrains will easily get the better of the other sons of France —"

"Great God!" exclaimed Lecamus.

"Don't cry out in that way, — it is like a burgher who knows nothing of the court, — but go at once to

Ambroise and find out from him what he intends to do to save the king's life. If there is anything decided on, come back to me at once, and tell me the treatment in which he has such faith."

"But — " said Lecamus.

"Obey blindly, my dear friend ; otherwise you will get your mind bewildered."

"He is right," thought the furrier. "I had better not know more ;" and he went at once in search of the king's surgeon, who lived at a hostelry in the place du Martroi.

Catherine de' Medici was at this moment in a political extremity very much like that in which poor Christophe had seen her at Blois. Though she had been in a way trained by the struggle, though she had exercised her lofty intellect by the lessons of that first defeat, her present situation, while nearly the same, had become more critical, more perilous than it was at Amboise. Events, like the woman herself, had magnified. Though she seemed to be in full accordance with the Guises, Catherine held in her hand the threads of a wisely planned conspiracy against her terrible associates, and was only awaiting a propitious moment to throw off the mask. The cardinal had just obtained the positive certainty that Catherine was deceiving him. Her subtle Italian spirit felt that the Younger branch was the best hindrance she could offer to the ambition of the duke and cardinal ; and (in spite of the advice of the two Gondis, who urged her to let the Guises wreak their vengeance on the Bourbons) she defeated the scheme concocted by them with Spain to seize the province of Béarn, by warning Jeanne d'Albret, queen of

Navarre, of that threatened danger. As this state secret was known only to them and to the queen-mother, the Guises knew of course who had betrayed it, and resolved to send her back to Florence. But in order to make themselves perfectly sure of what they called her treason against the State (the State being the house of Lorraine), the duke and cardinal confided to her their intention of getting rid of the king of Navarre. The precautions instantly taken by Antoine proved conclusively to the two brothers that the secrets known only to them and the queen-mother had been divulged by the latter. The cardinal instantly taxed her with treachery, in presence of François II., — threatening her with an edict of banishment in case of future indiscretion, which might, as they said, put the kingdom in danger.

Catherine, who then felt herself in the utmost peril, acted in the spirit of a great king, giving proof of her high capacity. It must be added, however, that she was ably seconded by her friends. L'Hôpital managed to send her a note, written in the following terms : —

“Do not allow a prince of the blood to be put to death by a committee; or you will yourself be carried off in some way.”

Catherine sent Birago to Vignay to tell the chancellor (l'Hôpital) to come to Orléans at once, in spite of his being in disgrace. Birago returned the very night of which we are writing, and was now a few miles from Orléans with l'Hôpital, who heartily avowed himself for the queen-mother. Chiverni, whose fidelity was very justly suspected by the Guises, had escaped from

Orléans, and reached Écouen in ten hours, by a forced march which almost cost him his life. There he told the Connétable de Montmorency of the peril of his nephew, the Prince de Condé, and the audacious hopes of the Guises. The Connétable, furious at the thought that the prince's life hung upon that of François II., started for Orléans at once with a hundred noblemen and fifteen hundred cavalry. In order to take the Messieurs de Guise by surprise he avoided Paris, and came direct from Écouen to Corbeil, and from Corbeil to Pithiviers by the valley of the Essonne.

"Soldier against soldier, we must leave no chances," he said on the occasion of this bold march.

Anne de Montmorency, who had saved France at the time of the invasion of Provence by Charles V., and the Duc de Guise, who had stopped the second invasion of the emperor at Metz, were, in truth, the two great warriors of France at this period. Catherine had awaited this precise moment to rouse the inextinguishable hatred of the Connétable, whose disgrace and banishment were the work of the Guises. The Marquis de Simense, however, who commanded at Gien, being made aware of the large force approaching under command of the Connétable, jumped on his horse hoping to reach Orléans in time to warn the duke and cardinal.

Sure that the Connétable would come to the rescue of his nephew, and full of confidence in the Chancellor l'Hôpital's devotion to the royal cause, the queen-mother revived the hopes and the boldness of the Reformed party. The Colignys and the friends of the house of Bourbon, aware of their danger, now made common cause with the adherents of the queen-mother.

A coalition between these opposing interests, attacked by a common enemy, formed itself silently in the States-general, where it soon became a question of appointing Catherine as regent in case the king should die. Catherine, whose faith in astrology was much greater than her faith in the Church, now dared all against her oppressors, seeing that her son was ill and apparently dying at the expiration of the time assigned to his life by the famous sorceress, whom Nostradamus had brought to her at the château of Chaumont.

XI.

AMBROISE PARÉ.

SOME days before the terrible end of the reign of François II., the king insisted on sailing down the Loire, wishing not to be in the town of Orléans on the day when the Prince de Condé was executed. Having yielded the head of the prince to the Cardinal de Lorraine, he was equally in dread of a rebellion among the townspeople and of the prayers and supplications of the Princesse de Condé. At the moment of embarkation, one of the cold winds which sweep along the Loire at the beginning of winter gave him so sharp an earache that he was obliged to return to his apartments; there he took to his bed, not leaving it again until he died. In contradiction of the doctors, who, with the exception of Chapelain, were his enemies, Ambroise Paré insisted that an abscess was formed in the king's head, and that unless an issue were given to it, the danger of death would increase daily. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and the curfew law, which was sternly enforced in Orléans, at this time practically in a state of siege, Paré's lamp shone from his window, and he was deep in study, when Lecamus called to him from below. Recognizing the voice of his old friend, Paré ordered that he should be admitted.

"You take no rest, Ambroise; while saving the lives of others you are wasting your own," said the furrier

as he entered, looking at the surgeon, who sat, with opened books and scattered instruments, before the head of a dead man, lately buried and now disinterred, in which he had cut an opening.

“It is a matter of saving the king’s life.”

“Are you sure of doing it, Ambroise?” cried the old man, trembling.

“As sure as I am of my own existence. The king, my old friend, has a morbid ulcer pressing on his brain, which will presently suffuse it if no vent is given to it, and the danger is imminent. But by boring the skull I expect to release the pus and clear the head. I have already performed this operation three times. It was invented by a Piedmontese ; but I have had the honor to perfect it. The first operation I performed was at the siege of Metz, on Monsieur de Pienne, whom I cured, who was afterwards all the more intelligent in consequence. His was an abscess caused by the blow of an arquebuse. The second was on the head of a pauper, on whom I wanted to prove the value of the audacious operation Monsieur de Pienne had allowed me to perform. The third I did in Paris on a gentleman, who is now entirely recovered. Trepanning — that is the name given to the operation — is very little known. Patients refuse it, partly because of the imperfection of the instruments ; but I have at last improved them. I am practising now on this skull, that I may be sure of not failing to-morrow, when I operate on the head of the king.”

“You ought indeed to be very sure you are right, for your own head would be in danger in case —”

“I’d wager my life I can cure him,” replied Ambroise.

with the conviction of a man of genius. "Ah! my old friend, where's the danger of boring into a skull with proper precautions? That is what soldiers do in battle every day of their lives, without taking any precautions."

"My son," said the burgher, boldly, "do you know that to save the king is to ruin France? Do you know that this instrument of yours will place the crown of the Valois on the head of the Lorraine who calls himself the heir of Charlemagne? Do you know that surgery and policy are at this moment sternly opposed to each other? Yes, the triumph of your genius will be the death of your religion. If the Guises gain the regency, the blood of the Reformers will flow like water. Be a greater citizen than you are a surgeon; oversleep yourself to-morrow morning and leave a free field to the other doctors who if they cannot cure the king will cure France."

"I!" exclaimed Paré. "I leave a man to die when I can cure him? No, no! were I to hang as an abettor of Calvin I shall go early to court. Do you not feel that the first and only reward I shall ask will be the life of your Christophe? Surely at such a moment Queen Mary can deny me nothing."

"Alas! my friend," returned Lecamus, "the little king has refused the pardon of the Prince de Condé to the princess. Do not kill your religion by saving the life of a man who ought to die."

"Do not you meddle with God's ordering of the future!" cried Paré. "Honest men can have but one motto: *Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra!* — do thy duty, come what will. That is what I did at the

siege of Calais when I put my foot on the face of the Duc de Guise, — I ran the risk of being strangled by his friends and his servants ; but to-day I am surgeon to the king ; moreover I am of the Reformed religion ; and yet the Guises are my friends. I shall save the king," cried the surgeon, with the sacred enthusiasm of a conviction bestowed by genius, " and God will save France ! "

A knock was heard on the street door and presently one of Paré's servants gave a paper to Lecamus, who read aloud these terrifying words : —

" A scaffold is being erected at the convent of the Récollets : the Prince de Condé will be beheaded there tomorrow."

Ambroise and Lecamus looked at each other with an expression of the deepest horror.

" I will go and see it for myself," said the furrier.

No sooner was he in the open street than Ruggiero took his arm and asked by what means Ambroise Paré proposed to save the king. Fearing some trickery, the old man, instead of answering, replied that he wished to go and see the scaffold. The astrologer accompanied him to the place des Récollets, and there, truly enough, they found the carpenters putting up the horrible framework by torchlight.

" Hey, my friend," said Lecamus to one of the men, " what are you doing here at this time of night ? "

" We are preparing for the hanging of heretics, as the blood-letting at Amboise did n't cure them," said a young Récollet who was superintending the work.

" Monseigneur the cardinal is very right," said Ruggiero, prudently ; " but in my country we do better."

"What do you do?" said the young priest.

"We burn them."

Lecamus was forced to lean on the astrologer's arm, for his legs gave way beneath him; he thought it probable that on the morrow his son would hang from one of those gibbets. The poor old man was thrust between two sciences, astrology and surgery, both of which promised him the life of his son, for whom in all probability that scaffold was now erecting. In the trouble and distress of his mind, the Florentine was able to knead him like dough.

"Well, my worthy dealer in minever, what do you say now to the Lorraine jokes?" whispered Ruggiero.

"Alas! you know I would give my skin if that of my son were safe and sound."

"That is talking like your trade," said the Italian; "but explain to me the operation which Ambroise means to perform upon the king, and in return I will promise you the life of your son."

"Faithfully?" exclaimed the old furrier.

"Shall I swear it to you?" said Ruggiero.

Thereupon the poor old man repeated his conversation with Ambroise Paré to the astrologer, who, the moment that the secret of the great surgeon was divulged to him, left the poor father abruptly in the street in utter despair.

"What the devil does he mean, that miscreant?" cried Lecamus, as he watched Ruggiero hurrying with rapid steps to the place de l'Esteppe.

Lecamus was ignorant of the terrible scene that was taking place around the royal bed, where the imminent danger of the king's death and the consequent loss of

power to the Guises had caused the hasty erection of the scaffold for the Prince de Condé, whose sentence had been pronounced, as it were by default, — the execution of it being delayed by the king's illness.

Absolutely no one but the persons on duty were in the halls, staircases, and courtyard of the royal residence, Le Bailliage. The crowd of courtiers were flocking to the house of the king of Navarre, on whom the regency would devolve on the death of the king, according to the laws of the kingdom. The French nobility, alarmed by the audacity of the Guises, felt the need of rallying around the chief of the younger branch, when, ignorant of the queen-mother's Italian policy, they saw her the apparent slave of the duke and cardinal. Antoine de Bourbon, faithful to his secret agreement with Catherine, was bound not to renounce the regency in her favor until the States-general had declared for it.

The solitude in which the king's house was left had a powerful effect on the mind of the Duc de Guise when, on his return from an inspection, made by way of precaution through the city, he found no one there but the friends who were attached exclusively to his own fortunes. The chamber in which was the king's bed adjoined the great hall of the Bailliage. It was at that period panelled in oak. The ceiling, composed of long, narrow boards carefully joined and painted, was covered with blue arabesques on a gold ground, a part of which being torn down about fifty years ago was instantly purchased by a lover of antiquities. This room, hung with tapestry, the floor being covered with a carpet, was so dark and gloomy that the torches threw scarcely any light. The

vast four-post bedstead with its silken curtains was like a tomb. Beside her husband, close to his pillow, sat Mary Stuart, and near her the Cardinal de Lorraine. Catherine was seated in a chair at a little distance. The famous Jean Chapelain, the physician on duty (who was afterwards chief physician to Charles IX.) was standing before the fireplace. The deepest silence reigned. The young king, pale and shrunken, lay as if buried in his sheets, his pinched little face scarcely showing on the pillow. The Duchesse de Guise, sitting on a stool, attended Queen Mary, while on the other side, near Catherine, in the recess of a window, Madame de Fiesque stood watching the gestures and looks of the queen-mother; for she knew the dangers of her position.

In the hall, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, Monsieur de Cypierre, governor of the Duc d'Orléans and now appointed governor of the town, occupied one corner of the fireplace with the two Gondis. Cardinal de Tournon, who in this crisis espoused the interests of the queen-mother on finding himself treated as an inferior by the Cardinal de Lorraine, of whom he was certainly the ecclesiastical equal, talked in a low voice to the Gondis. The marshals de Vieilleville and Saint-André and the keeper of the seals, who presided at the States-general, were talking together in a whisper of the dangers to which the Guises were exposed.

The lieutenant-general of the kingdom crossed the room on his entrance, casting a rapid glance about him, and bowed to the Duc d'Orléans whom he saw there.

"Monseigneur," he said, "this will teach you to know men. The Catholic nobility of the kingdom have

gone to pay court to a heretic prince, believing that the States-general will give the regency to the heirs of a traitor who long detained in prison your illustrious grandfather."

Then having said these words, which were destined to plough a furrow in the heart of the young prince, he passed into the bedroom, where the king was not so much asleep as plunged in a heavy torpor. The Duc de Guise was usually able to correct the sinister aspect of his scarred face by an affable and pleasing manner, but on this occasion, when he saw the instrument of his power breaking in his very hands, he was unable to force a smile. The cardinal, whose civil courage was equal to his brother's military daring, advanced a few steps to meet him.

"Robertet thinks that little Pinard is sold to the queen-mother," he whispered, leading the duke into the hall; "they are using him to work upon the members of the States-general."

"Well, what does it signify if we are betrayed by a secretary when all else betrays us?" cried the lieutenant-general. "The town is for the Reformation, and we are on the eve of a revolt. Yes! the *Wasps* are discontented;" he continued, giving the Orléans people their nickname; "and if Paré does not save the king we shall have a terrible uprising. Before long we shall be forced to besiege Orléans, which is nothing but a bog of Huguenots."

"I have been watching that Italian woman," said the cardinal, "as she sits there with absolute insensibility. She is watching and waiting, God forgive her! for the death of her son; and I ask myself whether we

should not do a wise thing to arrest her at once, and also the king of Navarre."

"It is already more than we want upon our hands to have the Prince de Condé in prison," replied the duke.

The sound of a horseman riding in haste to the gate of the Bailliage echoed through the hall. The duke and cardinal went to the window, and by the light of the torches which were in the portico the duke recognized on the rider's hat the famous Lorraine cross, which the cardinal had lately ordered his partisans to wear. He sent an officer of the guard, who was stationed in the antechamber, to give entrance to the new-comer; and went himself, followed by his brother, to meet him on the landing.

"What is it, my dear Simeuse?" asked the duke, with that charm of manner which he always displayed to military men, as soon as he recognized the governor of Gien.

"The Connétable has reached Pithiviers; he left Écouen with two thousand cavalry and one hundred nobles."

"With their suites?"

"Yes, monseigneur," replied Simeuse; "in all, two thousand six hundred men. Some say that Thoré is behind them with a body of infantry. If the Connétable delays awhile, expecting his son, you still have time to repulse him —"

"Is that all you know? Are the reasons of this sudden call to arms made known?"

"Montmorency talks as little as he writes; go you and meet him, brother, while I prepare to welcome him

with the head of his nephew," said the cardinal, giving orders that Robertet be sent to him at once.

"Vieilleville!" cried the duke to the maréchal, who came immediately. "The Connétable has the audacity to come here under arms; if I go to meet him will you be responsible to hold the town?"

"As soon as you leave it the burghers will fly to arms; and who can answer for the result of an affair between cavalry and citizens in these narrow streets?" replied the maréchal.

"Monseigneur," said Robertet, rushing hastily up the stairs, "the Chancelier de l'Hôpital is at the gate and asks to enter; are we to let him in?"

"Yes, open the gate," answered the cardinal. "Connétable and chancelier together would be dangerous; we must separate them. We have been boldly tricked by the queen-mother into choosing l'Hôpital as chancellor."

Robertet nodded to a captain of the guard, who awaited an answer at the foot of the staircase; then he turned round quickly to receive the orders of the cardinal.

"Monseigneur, I take the liberty," he said, making one last effort, "to point out that the sentence should be approved by *the king in council*. If you violate the law on a prince of the blood, it will not be respected for either a cardinal or a Duc de Guise."

"Pinard has upset your mind, Robertet," said the cardinal, sternly. "Do you not know that the king signed the order of execution the day he was about to leave Orléans, in order that the sentence might be carried out in his absence?"

The lieutenant-general listened to this discussion without a word, but he took his brother by the arm and led him into a corner of the hall.

"Undoubtedly," he said, "the heirs of Charlemagne have the right to recover the crown which was usurped from their house by Hugh Capet; but can they do it? The pear is not yet ripe. Our nephew is dying, and the whole court has gone over to the king of Navarre."

"The king's heart failed him, or the Béarnais would have been stabbed before now," said the cardinal; "and we could easily have disposed of the Valois children."

"We are very ill-placed here," said the duke; "the rebellion of the town will be supported by the States-general. L'Hôpital, whom we protected while the queen-mother opposed his appointment, is to-day against us, and yet it is all-important that we should have the justiciary with us. Catherine has too many supporters at the present time; we cannot send her back to Italy. Besides, there are still three Valois princes —"

"She is no longer a mother, she is all queen," said the cardinal. "In my opinion, this is the moment to make an end of her. Vigor, and more and more vigor! that's my prescription!" he cried.

So saying, the cardinal returned to the king's chamber, followed by the duke. The priest went straight to the queen-mother.

"The papers of Lasagne, the secretary of the Prince de Condé, have been communicated to you, and you now know that the Bourbons are endeavoring to dethrone your son."

"I know all that," said Catherine.

“ Well, then, will you give orders to arrest the king of Navarre? ”

“ There is,” she said with dignity, “ a lieutenant-general of the kingdom.”

At this instant François II. groaned piteously, complaining aloud of the terrible pains in his ear. The physician left the fireplace where he was warming himself, and went to the bedside to examine the king's head.

“ Well, monsieur? ” said the Duc de Guise, interrogatively.

“ I dare not take upon myself to apply a blister to draw the abscess. Maître Ambroise has promised to save the king's life by an operation, and I might thwart it.”

“ Let us postpone the treatment till to-morrow morning,” said Catherine, coldly, “ and order all the physicians to be present ; for we all know the calumnies to which the death of kings gives rise.”

She went to her son and kissed his hand ; then she withdrew to her own apartments.

“ With what composure that audacious daughter of a shop-keeper alluded to the death of the dauphin, poisoned by Montecuculi, one of her own Italian followers ! ” said Mary Stuart.

“ Mary ! ” cried the little king, “ my grandfather never doubted her innocence.”

“ Can we prevent that woman from coming here to-morrow? ” said the queen to her uncles in a low voice.

“ What will become of us if the king dies? ” returned the cardinal, in a whisper. “ Catherine will shovel us all into his grave.”

Thus the question was plainly put between Catherine de' Medici and the house of Lorraine during that fatal night. The arrival of the Connétable de Montmorency and the Chancelier de l'Hôpital were distinct indications of rebellion ; the morning of the next day would therefore be decisive.

XII.

DEATH OF FRANÇOIS II.

ON the morrow the queen-mother was the first to enter the king's chamber. She found no one there but Mary Stuart, pale and weary, who had passed the night in prayer beside the bed. The Duchesse de Guise had kept her mistress company, and the maids of honor had taken turns in relieving one another. The young king slept. Neither the duke nor the cardinal had yet appeared. The priest, who was bolder than the soldier, had, it was afterward said, put forth his utmost energy during the night to induce his brother to make himself king. But, in face of the assembled States-general, and threatened by a battle with Montmorency, the Balafre declared the circumstances unfavorable; he refused, against his brother's utmost urgency, to arrest the king of Navarre, the queen-mother, l'Hôpital, the Cardinal de Tournon, the Gondis, Ruggiero, and Birago, objecting that such violent measures would bring on a general rebellion. He postponed the cardinal's scheme until the fate of François II. should be determined.

The deepest silence reigned in the king's chamber. Catherine, accompanied by Madame de Fiesque, went to the bedside and gazed at her son with a semblance of grief that was admirably simulated. She put her

handkerchief to her eyes and walked to the window where Madame de Fiesque brought her a seat. Thence she could see into the courtyard.

It had been agreed between Catherine and the Cardinal de Tournon that if the Connétable should successfully enter the town the cardinal would come to the king's house with the two Gondis; if otherwise, he would come alone. At nine in the morning the duke and cardinal, followed by their gentlemen, who remained in the hall, entered the king's bedroom, — the captain on duty having informed them that Ambroise Paré had arrived, together with Chapelain and three other physicians, who hated Paré and were all in the queen-mother's interests.

A few moments later and the great hall of the Bailliage presented much the same aspect as that of the Salle des gardes at Blois on the day when Christophe was put to the torture and the Duc de Guise was proclaimed lieutenant-governor of the kingdom, — with the single exception that whereas love and joy overflowed the royal chamber and the Guises triumphed, death and mourning now reigned within that darkened room, and the Guises felt that power was slipping through their fingers. The maids of honor of the two queens were again in their separate camps on either side of the fireplace, in which glowed a monstrous fire. The hall was filled with courtiers. The news — spread about, no one knew how — of some daring operation contemplated by Ambroise Paré to save the king's life, had brought back the lords and gentlemen who had deserted the house the day before. The outer staircase and courtyard were filled by an anxious crowd. The scaffold erected during

the night for the Prince de Condé opposite to the convent of the Récollets, had amazed and startled the whole nobility. All present spoke in a low voice and the talk was the same mixture as at Blois, of frivolous and serious, light and earnest matters. The habit of expecting troubles, sudden revolutions, calls to arms, rebellions, and great events, which marked the long period during which the house of Valois was slowly being extinguished in spite of Catherine de' Medici's great efforts to preserve it, took its rise at this time.

A deep silence prevailed for a certain distance beyond the door of the king's chamber, which was guarded by two halberdiers, two pages, and by the captain of the Scotch guard. Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, held a prisoner in his own house, learned by his present desertion the hopes of the courtiers who had flocked to him the day before, and was horrified by the news of the preparations made during the night for the execution of his brother.

Standing before the fireplace in the great hall of the Bailliage was one of the greatest and noblest figures of that day, — the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, wearing his crimson robe lined and edged with ermine, and his cap on his head according to the privilege of his office. This courageous man, seeing that his benefactors were traitorous and self-seeking, held firmly to the cause of the kings, represented by the queen-mother; at the risk of losing his head, he had gone to Rouen to consult with the Connétable de Montmorency. No one ventured to draw him from the revery in which he was plunged. Robertet, the secretary of State, two marshals of France, Vicilleville, and Saint-André, and the

keeper of the seals, were collected in a group before the chancellor. The courtiers present were not precisely jesting; but their talk was malicious, especially among those who were not for the Guises.

Presently voices were heard to rise in the king's chamber. The two marshals, Robertet and the chancellor went nearer to the door; for not only was the life of the king in question, but, as the whole court knew well, the chancellor, the queen-mother, and her adherents were in the utmost danger. A deep silence fell on the whole assembly.

Ambroise Paré had by this time examined the king's head; he thought the moment propitious for his operation; if it was not performed suffusion would take place, and François II. might die at any moment. As soon as the duke and cardinal entered the chamber he explained to all present the causes of the king's illness, stating that in so urgent a case it was necessary to trepan the head, and he now waited till the king's physician ordered him to perform the operation.

"Cut the head of my son as though it were a plank! — with that horrible instrument!" cried Catherine de' Medici. "Maitre Ambroise, I will not permit it."

The physicians were consulting together; but Catherine spoke in so loud a voice that her words reached, as she intended they should, beyond the door.

"But, madame, if there is no other way to save him?" said Mary Stuart, weeping.

"Ambroise," cried Catherine; "remember that your head will answer for the king's life."

"We are opposed to the treatment suggested by Maitre Ambroise," said the three physicians. "The

king can be saved by injecting through the ear a remedy which will draw the contents of the abscess through that passage."

The Duc de Guise, who was watching Catherine's face, suddenly went up to her and drew her into the recess of the window.

"Madame," he said, "you wish the death of your son; you are in league with our enemies, and have been since Blois. This morning the Counsellor Viole told the son of your furrier that the Prince de Condé's head was about to be cut off. That young man, who, when the question was applied, persisted in denying all relations with the prince, made a sign of farewell to him as he passed before the window of his dungeon. You saw your unhappy accomplice tortured with royal insensibility. You are now endeavoring to prevent the recovery of your eldest son. Your conduct forces us to believe that the death of the dauphin, which placed the crown on your husband's head was not a natural one, and that Montecuculi was your —"

"Monsieur le chancelier!" cried Catherine, at a sign from whom Madame de Fiesque opened both sides of the bedroom door.

The company in the hall then saw the scene that was taking place in the royal chamber: the livid little king, his face half dead, his eyes sightless, his lips stammering the word "Mary," as he held the hand of the weeping queen; the Duchesse de Guise motionless, frightened by Catherine's daring act; the duke and cardinal, also alarmed, keeping close to the queen-mother and resolving to have her arrested on the spot by Maillé-Brézé; lastly, the tall Ambroise Paré, assisted

by the king's physician, holding his instrument in his hand but not daring to begin the operation, for which composure and total silence were as necessary as the consent of the other surgeons.

"Monsieur le chancelier," said Catherine, "the Messieurs de Guise wish to authorize a strange operation upon the person of the king; Ambroise Paré is preparing to cut open his head. I, as the king's mother and a member of the council of the regency, — I protest against what appears to me a crime of *lèse-majesté*. The king's physicians advise an injection through the ear, which seems to me as efficacious and less dangerous than the brutal operation proposed by Paré."

When the company in the hall heard these words a smothered murmur rose from their midst; the cardinal allowed the chancellor to enter the bedroom and then he closed the door.

"I am lieutenant-general of the kingdom," said the Due de Guise; "and I would have you know, Monsieur le chancelier, that Ambroise, the king's surgeon, answers for his life."

"Ah! if this be the turn that things are taking!" exclaimed Ambroise Paré. "I know my rights and how I should proceed." He stretched his arm over the bed. "This bed and the king are mine. I claim to be sole master of this case and solely responsible. I know the duties of my office; I shall operate upon the king without the sanction of the physicians."

"Save him!" said the cardinal, "and you shall be the richest man in France."

"Go on!" cried Mary Stuart, pressing the surgeon's hand.

"I cannot prevent it," said the chancellor; "but I shall record the protest of the queen-mother."

"Robertet!" called the Duc de Guise.

When Robertet entered, the lieutenant-general pointed to the chancellor.

"I appoint you chancellor of France in the place of that traitor," he said. "Monsieur de Maillé, take Monsieur de l'Hôpital and put him in the prison of the Prince de Condé. As for you, madame," he added, turning to Catherine; "your protest will not be received; you ought to be aware that any such protest must be supported by sufficient force. I act as the faithful subject and loyal servant of king François II., my master. Go on, Ambroise," he added, looking at the surgeon.

"Monsieur de Guise," said l'Hôpital; "if you employ violence either upon the king or upon the chancellor of France, remember that enough of the nobility of France are in that hall to rise and arrest you as a traitor."

"Oh! my lords," cried the great surgeon; "if you continue these arguments you will soon proclaim Charles IX! — for king François is about to die."

Catherine de' Medici, absolutely impassive, gazed from the window.

"Well, then, we shall employ force to make ourselves masters of this room," said the cardinal, advancing to the door.

But when he opened it even he was terrified; the whole house was deserted! The courtiers, certain now of the death of the king, had gone in a body to the king of Navarre.

"Well, go on, perform your duty," cried Mary Stuart, vehemently, to Ambroise. "I — and you, duchess," she said to Madame de Guise, — "will protect you."

"Madame," said Ambroise; "my zeal was carrying me away. The doctors, with the exception of my friend Chapelain, prefer an injection, and it is my duty to submit to their wishes. If I had been chief surgeon and chief physician, which I am not, the king's life would probably have been saved. Give that to me, gentlemen," he said, stretching out his hand for the syringe, which he proceeded to fill.

"Good God!" cried Mary Stuart, "but I order you to —"

"Alas! madame," said Ambroise, "I am under the direction of these gentlemen."

The young queen placed herself between the surgeon, the doctors, and the other persons present. The chief physician held the king's head, and Ambroise made the injection into the ear. The duke and the cardinal watched the proceeding attentively. Robertet and Monsieur de Maillé stood motionless. Madame de Fiesque, at a sign from Catherine, glided unperceived from the room. A moment later l'Hôpital boldly opened the door of the king's chamber.

"I arrive in good time," said the voice of a man whose hasty steps echoed through the great hall, and who stood the next moment on the threshold of the open door. "Ah, messieurs, so you meant to take off the head of my good nephew, the Prince de Condé? Instead of that, you have forced the lion from his lair and — here I am!" added the Connétable de Mont-

morency. "Ambroise, you shall not plunge your knife into the head of my king. The first prince of the blood, Antoine de Bourbon, the Prince de Condé, the queen-mother, the Connétable, and the chancellor forbid the operation."

To Catherine's great satisfaction, the king of Navarre and the Prince de Condé now entered the room.

"What does this mean?" said the Duc de Guise, laying his hand on his dagger.

"It means that in my capacity as Connétable, I have dismissed the sentinels of all your posts. *Tête Dieu!* you are not in an enemy's country, methinks. The king, our master, is in the midst of his loyal subjects, and the States-general must be suffered to deliberate at liberty. I come, messieurs, from the States-general. I carried the protest of my nephew de Condé before that assembly, and three hundred of those gentlemen have released him. You wish to shed royal blood and to decimate the nobility of the kingdom, do you? Ha! in future, I defy you, and all your schemes, Messieurs de Lorraine. If you order the king's head opened, by this sword which saved France from Charles V., I say it shall not be done —"

"All the more," said Ambroise Paré; "because it is now too late; the suffusion has begun."

"Your reign is over, messieurs," said Catherine to the Guises, seeing from Paré's face that there was no longer any hope.

"Ah! madame, you have killed your own son," cried Mary Stuart as she bounded like a lioness from the bed to the window and seized the queen-mother by the arm, gripping it violently.

"My dear," replied Catherine, giving her daughter-in-law a cold, keen glance in which she allowed her hatred, repressed for the last six months, to overflow; "you, to whose inordinate love we owe this death, you will now go to reign in your Scotland, and you will start to-morrow. I am regent *de facto*." The three physicians having made her a sign, "Messieurs," she added, addressing the Guises, "it is agreed between Monsieur de Bourbon, appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom by the States-general, and me that the conduct of the affairs of the State is our business solely. Come, monsieur le chancelier."

"The king is dead!" said the Duc de Guise, compelled to perform his duties as Grand-master.

"Long live King Charles IX.!" cried all the noblemen who had come with the king of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and the Connétable.

The ceremonies which follow the death of a king of France were performed in almost total solitude. When the king-at-arms proclaimed aloud three times in the hall, "The king is dead!" there were very few persons present to reply, "Vive le roi!"

The queen-mother, to whom the Comtesse de Fiesque had brought the Duc d'Orléans, now Charles IX., left the chamber, leading her son by the hand, and all the remaining courtiers followed her. No one was left in the house where François II. had drawn his last breath, but the duke and the cardinal, the Duchesse de Guise, Mary Stuart, and Dayelle, together with the sentries at the door, the pages of the Grand-master, those of the cardinal, and their private secretaries.

"Vive la France!" cried several Reformers in the street, sounding the first cry of the opposition.

Robertet, who owed all he was to the duke and cardinal, terrified by their scheme and its present failure, went over secretly to the queen-mother, whom the ambassadors of Spain, England, the Empire, and Poland, hastened to meet on the staircase, brought thither by Cardinal de Tournon, who had gone to notify them as soon as he had made Queen Catherine a sign from the courtyard at the moment when she protested against the operation of Ambroise Paré.

"Well!" said the cardinal to the duke, "so the sons of Louis d'Outre-mer, the heirs of Charles de Lorraine flinched and lacked courage."

"We should have been exiled to Lorraine," replied the duke. "I declare to you, Charles, that if the crown lay there before me I would not stretch out my hand to pick it up. That's for my son to do."

"Will he have, as you have had, the army and Church on his side?"

"He will have something better."

"What?"

"The people!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Mary Stuart, clasping the stiffened hand of her first husband, now dead, "there is none but me to weep for this poor boy who loved me so!"

"How can we patch up matters with the queen-mother?" said the cardinal.

"Wait till she quarrels with the Huguenots," replied the duchess.

The conflicting interests of the house of Bourbon, of Catherine, of the Guises, and of the Reformed

party produced such confusion in the town of Orléans that, three days after the king's death, his body, completely forgotten in the Bailliage and put into a coffin by the menials of the house, was taken to Saint-Denis in a covered waggon, accompanied only by the Bishop of Senlis and two gentlemen. When the pitiable procession reached the little town of Étampes, a servant of the Chancellor l'Hôpital fastened to the waggon this severe inscription, which history has preserved: "Tanneguy de Chastel, where art thou? and yet thou wert a Frenchman!" — a stern reproach, which fell with equal force on Catherine de' Medici, Mary Stuart, and the Guises. What Frenchman does not know that Tanneguy de Chastel spent thirty thousand crowns of the coinage of that day (one million of our francs) at the funeral of Charles VII., the benefactor of his house?

No sooner did the tolling of the bells announce to the town of Orléans that François II. was dead, and the rumor spread that the Connétable de Montmorency had ordered the flinging open of the gates of the town, than Tourillon, the glover, rushed up into the garret of his house and went to a secret hiding-place.

"Good heavens! can he be dead?" he cried.

Hearing the words, a man rose to his feet and answered, "Ready to serve!" — the password of the Reformers who belonged to Calvin.

This man was Chaudieu, to whom Tourillon now related the events of the last eight days, during which time he had prudently left the minister alone in his hiding-place with a twelve-pound loaf of bread for his sole nourishment.

“Go instantly to the Prince de Condé, brother: ask him to give me a safe-conduct; and find me a horse,” cried the minister. “I must start at once.”

“Write him a line, or he will not receive me.”

“Here,” said Chaudieu, after writing a few words, “ask for a pass from the king of Navarre, for I must go to Geneva without a moment’s loss of time.”

XIII.

CALVIN.

Two hours later all was ready, and the ardent minister was on his way to Switzerland, accompanied by a nobleman in the service of the king of Navarre (of whom Chaudieu pretended to be the secretary), carrying with him despatches from the Reformers in the Dauphiné. This sudden departure was chiefly in the interests of Catherine de' Medici, who, in order to gain time to establish her power, had made a bold proposition to the Reformers which was kept a profound secret. This strange proceeding explains the understanding so suddenly apparent between herself and the leaders of the Reform. The wily woman gave, as a pledge of her good faith, an intimation of her desire to heal all differences between the two churches by calling an assembly, which should be neither a council, nor a conclave, nor a synod, but should be known by some new and distinctive name, if Calvin consented to the project. When this secret was afterwards divulged (be it remarked in passing) it led to an alliance between the Duc de Guise and the Connétable de Montmorency against Catherine and the king of Navarre, — a strange alliance ! known in history as the Triumvirate, the Maréchal de Saint-André being the third personage in the purely Catholic coalition to which this singular proposition for a “colloquy” gave rise.

The secret of Catherine's wily policy was rightly understood by the Guises; they felt certain that the queen cared nothing for this mysterious assembly, and was only temporizing with her new allies in order to secure a period of peace until the majority of Charles IX.; but none the less did they deceive the Connétable into fearing a collusion of real interests between the queen and the Bourbons, — whereas, in reality, Catherine was playing them all one against another.

The queen had become, as the reader will perceive, extremely powerful in a very short time. The spirit of discussion and controversy which now sprang up was singularly favorable to her proposition. The Catholics and the Reformers were equally pleased to exhibit their brilliancy one after another in this tournament of words; for that is what it actually was, and no more. It is extraordinary that historians have mistaken one of the wildest schemes of the great queen for uncertainty and hesitation! Catherine never went more directly to her own ends than in just such schemes which appeared to thwart them. The king of Navarre, quite incapable of understanding her motives, fell into her plan in all sincerity, and despatched Chaudieu to Calvin, as we have seen. The minister had risked his life to be secretly in Orléans and watch events; for he was, while there, in hourly peril of being discovered and hung as a man under sentence of banishment.

According to the then fashion of travelling, Chaudieu could not reach Geneva before the month of February, and the negotiations were not likely to be concluded before the end of March; consequently the assembly could, certainly not take place before the month of May, 1561

Catherine, meantime, intended to amuse the court and the various conflicting interests by the coronation of the king, and the ceremonies of his first "lit de justice," at which l'Hôpital and de Thou recorded the letters-patent by which Charles IX. confided the administration to his mother in common with the present lieutenant-general of the kingdom, Antoine de Navarre, the weakest prince of those days.

Is it not a strange spectacle this of the great kingdom of France waiting in suspense for the "yes," or "no" of a French burgher, hitherto an obscure man, living for many years past in Geneva? The transalpine pope held in check by the pontiff of Geneva! The two Lorrain princes, lately all-powerful, now paralyzed by the momentary coalition of the queen-mother and the first prince of the blood with Calvin! Is not this, I say, one of the most instructive lessons ever given to kings by history, — a lesson which should teach them to study men, to seek out genius, and employ it, as did Louis XIV., wherever God has placed it?

Calvin, whose name was not Calvin but Cauvin, was the son of a cooper at Noyon in Picardy. The region of his birth explains in some degree the obstinacy combined with capricious eagerness which distinguished this arbiter of the destinies of France in the sixteenth century. Nothing is less known than the nature of this man, who gave birth to Geneva and to the spirit that emanated from that city. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who had very little historical knowledge, has completely ignored the influence of Calvin on his republic. At first the embryo Reformer, who lived in one of the humblest houses in the upper town, near the

church of Saint-Pierre, over a carpenter's shop (first resemblance between him and Robespierre), had no great authority in Geneva. In fact for a long time his power was malevolently checked by the Genevese. The town was the residence in those days of a citizen whose fame, like that of several others, remained unknown to the world at large and for a time to Geneva itself. This man, Farel, about the year 1537, detained Calvin in Geneva, pointing out to him that the place could be made the safe centre of a reformation more active and thorough than that of Luther. Farel and Calvin regarded Lutheranism as an incomplete work, — insufficient in itself and without any real grip upon France. Geneva, midway between France and Italy, and speaking the French language, was admirably situated for ready communication with Germany, France, and Italy. Calvin thereupon adopted Geneva as the site of his moral fortunes ; he made it thenceforth the citadel of his ideas.

The Council of Geneva, at Farel's entreaty, authorized Calvin in September, 1538, to give lectures on theology. Calvin left the duties of the ministry to Farel, his first disciple, and gave himself up patiently to the work of teaching his doctrine. His authority, which became so absolute in the last years of his life, was obtained with difficulty and very slowly. The great agitator met with such serious obstacles that he was banished for a time from Geneva on account of the severity of his reform. A party of honest citizens still clung to their old luxury and their old customs. But, as usually happens, these good people, fearing ridicule, would not admit the real object of their efforts, and kept up their warfare against the new doctrines on points

altogether foreign to the real question. Calvin insisted that *leavened bread* should be used for the communion, and that all feasts should be abolished except Sundays. These innovations were disapproved of at Berne and at Lausanne. Notice was served on the Genevese to conform to the ritual of Switzerland. Calvin and Farel resisted; their politic opponents used this disobedience to drive them from Geneva, whence they were, in fact, banished for several years. Later Calvin returned triumphantly at the demand of his flock. Such persecutions always become in the end the consecration of a moral power; and, in this case, Calvin's return was the beginning of his era as prophet. He then organized his religious Terror, and the executions began. On his reappearance in the city he was admitted into the ranks of the Genevese burghers; but even then, after fourteen years' residence, he was not made a member of the Council. At the time of which we write, when Catherine sent her envoy to him, this king of ideas had no other title than that of "pastor of the Church of Geneva." Moreover, Calvin never in his life received a salary of more than one hundred and fifty francs in money yearly, fifteen hundred-weight of wheat, and two barrels of wine. His brother, a tailor, kept a shop close to the place Saint-Pierre, in a street now occupied by one of the large printing establishments of Geneva. Such personal disinterestedness, which was lacking in Voltaire, Newton, and Bacon, but eminent in the lives of Rabelais, Spinoza, Loyola, Kant, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, is indeed a magnificent frame to those ardent and sublime figures.

The career of Robespierre can alone picture to the

minds of the present day that of Calvin, who, founding his power on the same bases, was as despotic and as cruel as the lawyer of Arras. It is a noticeable fact that Picardy (Arras and Noyon) furnished both these instruments of reformation! Persons who wish to study the motives of the executions ordered by Calvin will find, all relations considered, another 1793 in Geneva. Calvin cut off the head of Jacques Gruet "for having written impious letters, libertine verses, and for working to overthrow ecclesiastical ordinances." Reflect upon that sentence, and ask yourselves if the worst tyrants in their saturnalias ever gave more horribly burlesque reasons for their cruelties. Valentin Gentilis, condemned to death for "involuntary heresy," escaped execution only by making a submission far more ignominious than was ever imposed by the Catholic Church. Seven years before the conference which was now to take place in Calvin's house on the proposals of the queen-mother, Michel Servet, a *Frenchman*, traveling through Switzerland, was arrested at Geneva, tried, condemned, and burned alive, on Calvin's accusation, for having "attacked the mystery of the Trinity," in a book which was neither written nor published in Geneva. Remember the eloquent remonstrance of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose book, overthrowing the Catholic religion, written in France and published in Holland, was burned by the hangman, while the author, a foreigner, was merely banished from the kingdom where he had endeavored to destroy the fundamental proofs of religion and of authority. Compare the conduct of our Parliament with that of the Genevese tyrant. Again: Bolsée was brought to trial for "having

other ideas than those of Calvin on predestination." Consider these things, and ask yourselves if Fouquier-Tinville did worse. The savage religious intolerance of Calvin was, morally speaking, more implacable than the savage political intolerance of Robespierre. On a larger stage than that of Geneva, Calvin would have shed more blood than did the terrible apostle of political equality as opposed to Catholic equality. Three centuries earlier a monk of Picardy drove the whole West upon the East. Peter the Hermit, Calvin, and Robespierre, each at an interval of three hundred years and all three from the same region, were, politically speaking, the Archimedean screws of their age, — at each epoch a Thought which found its fulcrum in the self-interest of mankind.

Calvin was undoubtedly the maker of that melancholy town called Geneva, where, only ten years ago, a man said, pointing to a porte-cochère in the upper town, the first ever built there: "By that door luxury has invaded Geneva." Calvin gave birth, by the sternness of his doctrines and his executions, to that form of hypocritical sentiment called "*cant*."¹ According to those who practise it, good morals consist in renouncing the arts and the charms of life, in eating richly but without luxury, in silently amassing money without enjoying it otherwise than as Calvin enjoyed power — by thought. Calvin imposed on all the citizens of his adopted town the same gloomy pall which he spread over his own life. He created in the Consistory a Calvinistic inquisition, absolutely similar to the revolutionary tribunal of Robespierre. The Consistory denounced

¹ *Momerie*.

the persons to be condemned to the Council, and Calvin ruled the Council through the Consistory, just as Robespierre ruled the Convention through the Club of the Jacobins. In this way an eminent magistrate of Geneva was condemned to two months' imprisonment, the loss of all his offices, and the right of ever obtaining others "because he led a disorderly life and was intimate with Calvin's enemies." Calvin thus became a legislator. He created the austere, sober, commonplace, and hideously sad, but irreproachable manners and customs which characterize Geneva to the present day, — customs preceding those of England called Puritanism, which were due to the Cameronians, disciples of Caméron (a Frenchman deriving his doctrine from Calvin), whom Sir Walter Scott depicts so admirably. The poverty of a man, a sovereign master, who negotiated, power to power, with kings, demanding armies and subsidies, and plunging both hands into their savings laid aside for the unfortunate, proves that thought, used solely as a means of domination, gives birth to political misers, — men who enjoy by their brains only, and, like the Jesuits, want power for power's sake. Pitt, Luther, Calvin, Robespierre, all those Harpagons of power, died without a penny. The inventory taken in Calvin's house after his death, which comprised all his property, even his books, amounted in value, as history records, to two hundred and fifty francs. That of Luther came to about the same sum; his widow, the famous Catherine de Bora, was forced to petition for a pension of five hundred francs, which was granted to her by an Elector of Germany. Potemkin, Richelieu, Mazarin, those men of thought and action, all three of

whom made or laid the foundation of empires, each left over three hundred millions behind them. They had hearts; they loved women and the arts; they built, they conquered; whereas with the exception of the wife of Luther, the Helen of that Iliad, all the others had no tenderness, no beating of the heart for any woman with which to reproach themselves.

This brief digression was necessary in order to explain Calvin's position in Geneva.

During the first days of the month of February in the year 1561, on a soft, warm evening such as we may sometimes find at that season on Lake Lemman, two horsemen arrived at the Pré-l'Évêque, — thus called because it was the former country-place of the Bishop of Geneva, driven from Switzerland about thirty years earlier. These horsemen, who no doubt knew the laws of Geneva about the closing of the gates (then a necessity and now very ridiculous) rode in the direction of the Porte de Rive; but they stopped their horses suddenly on catching sight of a man, about fifty years of age, leaning on the arm of a servant-woman, and walking slowly toward the town. This man, who was rather stout, walked with difficulty, putting one foot after the other with pain apparently, for he wore round shoes of black velvet, laced in front.

"It is he!" said Chaudieu to the other horseman, who immediately dismounted, threw the reins to his companion, and went forward, opening wide his arms to the man on foot.

The man, who was Jean Calvin, drew back to avoid the embrace, casting a stern look at his disciple. At fifty years of age Calvin looked as though he were sixty.

Stout and stocky in figure, he seemed shorter still because the horrible sufferings of stone in the bladder obliged him to bend almost double as he walked. These pains were complicated by attacks of gout of the worst kind. Every one trembled before that face, almost as broad as it was long, on which, in spite of its roundness, there was as little human-kindness as on that of Henry the Eighth, whom Calvin greatly resembled. Sufferings which gave him no respite were manifest in the deep-cut lines starting from each side of the nose and following the curve of the moustache till they were lost in the thick gray beard. This face, though red and inflamed like that of a heavy drinker, showed spots where the skin was yellow. In spite of the velvet cap, which covered the huge square head, a vast forehead of noble shape could be seen and admired; beneath it shone two dark eyes, which must have flashed forth flame in moments of anger. Whether by reason of his obesity, or because of his thick, short neck, or in consequence of his vigils and his constant labors, Calvin's head was sunk between his broad shoulders, which obliged him to wear a fluted ruff of very small dimensions, on which his face seemed to lie like the head of John the Baptist on a charger. Between his moustache and his beard could be seen, like a rose, his small and fresh and eloquent little mouth, shaped in perfection. The face was divided by a square nose, remarkable for the flexibility of its entire length, the tip of which was significantly flat, seeming the more in harmony with the prodigious power expressed by the form of that imperial head. Though it might have been difficult to discover on his features any trace of the weekly headaches which

tormented Calvin in the intervals of the slow fever that consumed him, suffering, ceaselessly resisted by study and by will, gave to that mask, superficially so florid, a certain something that was terrible. Perhaps this impression was explainable by the color of a sort of greasy layer on the skin, due to the sedentary habits of the toiler, showing evidence of the perpetual struggle which went on between that valetudinarian temperament and one of the strongest wills ever known in the history of the human mind. The mouth, though charming, had an expression of cruelty. Chastity, necessitated by vast designs, exacted by so many sickly conditions, was written upon that face. Regrets were there, notwithstanding the serenity of that all-powerful brow, together with pain in the glance of those eyes, the calmness of which was terrifying.

Calvin's costume brought into full relief this powerful head. He wore the well-known cassock of black cloth, fastened round his waist by a black cloth belt with a brass buckle, which became thenceforth the distinctive dress of all Calvinist ministers, and was so uninteresting to the eye that it forced the spectator's attention upon the wearer's face.

"I suffer too much, Théodore, to embrace you," said Calvin to the elegant cavalier.

Théodore de Bèze, then forty-two years of age and lately admitted, at Calvin's request, as a Genevese burgher, formed a violent contrast to the terrible pastor whom he had chosen as his sovereign guide and ruler. Calvin, like all burghers raised to moral sovereignty, and all inventors of social systems, was eaten up with jealousy. He abhorred his disciples; he wanted

no equals; he could not bear the slightest contradiction. Yet there was between him and this graceful cavalier so marked a difference, Théodore de Bèze was gifted with so charming a personality enhanced by a politeness trained by court life, and Calvin felt him to be so unlike his other surly janissaries, that the stern reformer departed in de Bèze's case from his usual habits. He never loved him, for this harsh legislator totally ignored all friendship, but, not fearing him in the light of a successor, he liked to play with Théodore as Richelieu played with his cat; he found him supple and agile. Seeing how admirably de Bèze succeeded in all his missions, he took a fancy to the polished instrument of which he knew himself the mainspring and the manipulator; so true is it that the sternest of men cannot do without some semblance of affection. Théodore was Calvin's spoilt child; the harsh reformer never scolded him; he forgave him his dissipations, his amours, his fine clothes and his elegance of language. Perhaps Calvin was not unwilling to show that the Reformation had a few men of the world to compare with the men of the court. Théodore de Bèze was anxious to introduce a taste for the arts, for literature, and for poesy into Geneva, and Calvin listened to his plans without knitting his thick gray eyebrows. Thus the contrast of character and person between these two celebrated men was as complete and marked as the difference in their minds.

Calvin acknowledged Chaudieu's very humble salutation by a slight inclination of the head. Chaudieu slipped the bridles of both horses through his arms and followed the two great men of the Reformation, walking

to the left, behind de Bèze, who was on Calvin's right. The servant-woman hastened on in advance to prevent the closing of the *Porte de Rive*, by informing the captain of the guard that Calvin had been seized with sudden acute pains.

Théodore de Bèze was a native of the canton of Vézelay, which was the first to enter the Confederation, the curious history of which transaction has been written by one of the *Thierrys*. The burgher spirit of resistance, endemic at Vézelay, no doubt, played its part in the person of this man, in the great revolt of the Reformers; for de Bèze was undoubtedly one of the most singular personalities of the Heresy.

"You suffer still?" said Théodore to Calvin.

"A Catholic would say, 'like a lost soul,'" replied the Reformer, with the bitterness he gave to his slightest remarks. "Ah! I shall not be here long, my son. What will become of you without me?"

"We shall fight by the light of your books," said Chaudieu.

Calvin smiled; his red face changed to a pleased expression, and he looked favorably at Chaudieu.

"Well, have you brought me news? Have they massacred many of our people?" he said smiling, and letting a sarcastic joy shine in his brown eyes.

"No," said Chaudieu, "all is peaceful."

"So much the worse," cried Calvin; "so much the worse! All pacification is an evil, if indeed it is not a trap. Our strength lies in persecution. Where should we be if the Church accepted Reform?"

"But," said Théodore, "that is precisely what the queen-mother appears to wish."

"She is capable of it," remarked Calvin. "I study that woman —"

"What, at this distance?" cried Chaudieu.

"Is there any distance for the mind?" replied Calvin, sternly, for he thought the interruption irreverent. "Catherine seeks power, and women with that in their eye have neither honor nor faith. But what is she doing now?"

"I bring you a proposal from her to call a species of council," replied Théodore de Bèze.

"Near Paris?" asked Calvin, hastily.

"Yes."

"Ha! so much the better!" exclaimed the Reformer.

"We are to try to understand each other and draw up some public agreement which shall unite the two churches."

"Ah! if she would only have the courage to separate the French Church from the court of Rome, and create a patriarch for France as they did in the Greek Church!" cried Calvin, his eyes glistening at the idea thus presented to his mind of a possible throne. "But, my son, can the niece of a pope be sincere? She is only trying to gain time."

"She has sent away the Queen of Scots," said Chaudieu.

"One less!" remarked Calvin, as they passed through the Porte de Rive. "Elizabeth of England will restrain that one for us. Two neighboring queens will soon be at war with each other. One is handsome, the other ugly, — a first cause for irritation; besides, there's the question of illegitimacy —"

He rubbed his hands, and the character of his joy

was so evidently ferocious that de Bèze shuddered ; he saw the sea of blood his master was contemplating.

“The Guises have irritated the house of Bourbon,” said Théodore after a pause. They came to an open rupture at Orléans.”

“Ah !” said Calvin, “you would not believe me, my son, when I told you the last time you started for Nérac that we should end by stirring up war to the death between the two branches of the house of France? I have, at least, one court, one king and royal family on my side. My doctrine is producing its effect upon the masses. The burghers, too, understand me ; they regard as idolators all who go to Mass, who paint the walls of their churches, and put pictures and statues within them. Ha ! it is far more easy for a people to demolish churches and palaces than to argue the question of justification by faith, or the real presence. Luther was an arguer, but I, — I am an army ! He was a reasoner, I am a system. In short, my sons, he was merely a skirmisher, but I am Tarquin ! Yes, *my* faithful shall destroy pictures and pull down churches ; they shall make mill-stones of statues to grind the flour of the peoples. There are guilds and corporations in the States-general — I will have nothing there but individuals. Corporations resist ; they see clear where the masses are blind. We must join to our doctrine political interests which will consolidate it, and keep together the *matériel* of my armies. I have satisfied the logic of cautious souls and the minds of thinkers by this bared and naked worship which carries religion into the world of ideas ; I have made the peoples understand the advantages of suppressing cere-

mony. It is for you, Théodore, to enlist their interests; hold to that; go not beyond it. All is said in the way of doctrine; let no one add one iota. Why does Caméron; that little Gascon pastor, presume to write of it?"

Calvin, de Bèze, and Chandieu were mounting the steep streets of the upper town in the midst of a crowd, but the crowd paid not the slightest attention to the men who were unchaining the mobs of other cities and preparing them to ravage France.

After this terrible tirade, the three marched on in silence till they entered the little place Saint-Pierre and turned toward the pastor's house. On the second story of that house (never noted, and of which in these days no one is ever told in Geneva, where, it may be remarked, Calvin has no statue) his lodging consisted of three chambers with common pine floors and wainscots, at the end of which were the kitchen and the bedroom of his woman-servant. The entrance, as usually happened in most of the burgher households of Geneva, was through the kitchen, which opened into a little room with two windows, serving as parlor, salon, and dining-room. Calvin's study, where his thought had wrestled with suffering for the last fourteen years, came next, with the bedroom beyond it. Four oaken chairs covered with tapestry and placed around a square table were the sole furniture of the parlor. A stove of white porcelain, standing in one corner of the room, cast out a gentle heat. Panels and a wainscot of pine wood left in its natural state without decoration covered the walls. Thus the nakedness of the place was in keeping with the sober and simple life of the Reformer.

"Well?" said de Bèze as they entered, profiting by the few moments when Chaudieu left them to put up the horse at a neighboring inn, "what am I to do? Will you agree to the colloquy?"

"Of course," replied Calvin. "And it is you, my son, who will fight for us there. Be peremptory, be arbitrary. No one, neither the queen nor the Guises nor I, wants a pacification; it would not suit us at all. I have confidence in Duplessis-Mornay; let him play the leading part. Are we alone?" he added, with a glance of distrust into the kitchen, where two shirts and a few collars were stretched on a line to dry. "Go and shut all the doors. Well," he continued when Théodore returned, "we must drive the king of Navarre to join the Guises and the Connétable by advising him to break with Queen Catherine de' Medici. Let us get all the benefit of that poor creature's weakness. If he turns against the Italian she will, when she sees herself deprived of that support, necessarily unite with the Prince de Condé and Coligny. Perhaps this manœuvre will so compromise her that she will be forced to remain on our side."

Théodore de Bèze caught the hem of Calvin's cassock and kissed it.

"Oh! my master," he exclaimed, "how great you are!"

"Unfortunately, my dear Théodore, I am dying. If I die without seeing you again," he added, sinking his voice and speaking in the ear of his minister of foreign affairs, "remember to strike a great blow by the hand of some one of our martyrs."

"Another Minard to be killed?"

"Something better than a mere lawyer."

"A king?"

"Still better! — a man who wants to be a king."

"The Duc de Guise!" exclaimed Théodore, with an involuntary gesture.

"Well?" cried Calvin, who thought he saw disapproval or resistance in the gesture, and did not see at the same moment the entrance of Chaudieu. "Have we not the right to strike as we are struck? — yes, to strike in silence and in darkness. May we not return them wound for wound, and death for death? Would the Catholics hesitate to lay traps for us and massacre us? Assuredly not. Let us burn their churches! Forward, my children! And if you have devoted youths —"

"I have," said Chaudieu.

"Use them as engines of war! our cause justifies all means. Le Balafré, that terrible soldier, is, like me, more than a man; he is a dynasty, just as I am a system. He is able to annihilate us; therefore, I say, Death to the Guise!"

"I would rather have a peaceful victory, won by time and reason," said de Bèze.

"Time!" exclaimed Calvin, dashing his chair to the ground, "reason! Are you mad? Can reason achieve conquests? You know nothing of men, you who deal with them, idiot! The thing that injures my doctrine, you triple fool! is the reason that is in it. By the lighting of Saul, by the sword of Vengeance, thou pumpkin-head, do you not see the vigor given to my Reform by the massacre at Amboise? Ideas never grow till they are watered with blood. The slaying of the Duc de

Guise will lead to a horrible persecution, and I pray for it with all my might. Our reverses are preferable to success. The Reformation has an object to gain in being attacked; do you hear me, dolt? It cannot hurt us to be defeated, whereas Catholicism is at an end if we should win but a single battle. Ha! what are my lieutenants?—rags, wet rags instead of men! white-haired cravens! baptized apes! O God, grant me ten years more of life! If I die too soon the cause of true religion is lost in the hands of such boobies! You are as great a fool as Antoine de Navarre! Out of my sight! Leave me; I want a better negotiator than you! You are an ass, a popinjay, a poet! Go make your elegies and your acrostics, you trifler! Hence!”

The pains of his body were absolutely overcome by the fire of his anger; even the gout subsided under this horrible excitement of his mind. Calvin's face flushed purple, like the sky before a storm. His vast brow shone. His eyes flamed. He was no longer himself. He gave way utterly to the species of epileptic motion, full of passion, which was common with him. But in the very midst of it he was struck by the attitude of the two witnesses; then as he caught the words of Chaudieu saying to de Bèze, “The Burning Bush!” he sat down, was silent, and covered his face with his two hands, the knotted veins of which were throbbing in spite of their coarse texture.

Some minutes later, still shaken by this storm raised within him by the continence of his life, he said in a voice of emotion:—

“My sins, which are many, cost me less trouble to subdue, than my impatience. Oh, savage beast!

shall I never vanquish you?" he cried, beating his breast.

"My dear master," said de Bèze, in a tender voice, taking Calvin's hand and kissing it, "Jupiter thunders, but he knows how to smile."

Calvin looked at his disciple with a softened eye and said: —

"Understand me, my friends."

"I understand that the pastors of peoples bear great burdens," replied Théodore. "You have a world upon your shoulders."

"I have three martyrs," said Chaudieu, whom the master's outburst had rendered thoughtful, "on whom we can rely. Stuart, who killed Minard, is at liberty —"

"You are mistaken," said Calvin, gently, smiling after the manner of great men who bring fair weather into their faces as though they were ashamed of the previous storm. "I know human nature; a man may kill one president, but not two."

"Is it absolutely necessary?" asked de Bèze.

"Again!" exclaimed Calvin, his nostrils swelling. "Come, leave me, you will drive me to fury. Take my decision to the queen. You, Chaudieu, go your way, and hold your flock together in Paris. God guide you! Dinah, light my friends to the door."

"Will you not permit me to embrace you?" said Théodore, much moved. "Who knows what may happen to us on the morrow? We may be seized in spite of our safe-conduct."

"And yet you want to spare them!" cried Calvin, embracing de Bèze. Then he took Chaudieu's hand and

said: "Above all, no Huguenots, no Reformers, but *Calvinists!* Use no term but Calvinism. Alas! this is not ambition, for I am dying, — but it is necessary to destroy the whole of Luther, even to the name of Lutheran and Lutheranism."

"Ah! man divine," cried Chaudieu, "you well deserve such honors."

"Maintain the uniformity of the doctrine; let no one henceforth change or remark it. We are lost if new sects issue from our bosom."

We will here anticipate the events on which this Study is based, and close the history of Théodore de Bèze, who went to Paris with Chaudieu. It is to be remarked that Poltrot, who fired at the Duc de Guise fifteen months later, confessed under torture that he had been urged to the crime by Théodore de Bèze; though he retracted that avowal during subsequent tortures; so that Bossuet, after weighing all historical considerations, felt obliged to acquit Bèze of instigating the crime. Since Bossuet's time, however, an apparently futile dissertation, apropos of a celebrated song, has led a compiler of the eighteenth century to prove that the verses on the death of the Duc de Guise, sung by the Huguenots from one end of France to the other, was the work of Théodore de Bèze; and it is also proved that the famous song on the burial of Marlborough was a plagiarism on it.¹

¹ One of the most remarkable instances of the transmission of songs is that of Marlborough. Written in the first instance by a Huguenot on the death of the Duc de Guise in 1563, it was preserved in the French army, and appears to have been sung with variations, suppressions, and additions at the death of all gen-

erals of importance. When the intestine wars were over the song followed the soldiers into civil life. It was never forgotten (though the habit of singing it may have lessened), and in 1781, sixty years after the death of Marlborough, the wet-nurse of the Dauphin was heard to sing it as she suckled her nursling. When and why the name of the Duke of Marlborough was substituted for that of the Duc de Guise has never been ascertained. See "*Chansons Populaires*," par Charles Nisard : Paris, Dentu, 1867. — **Tr.**

XIV.

CATHERINE IN POWER.

THE day on which Théodore de Bèze and Chaudieu arrived in Paris, the court returned from Rheims, where Charles IX. was crowned. This ceremony, which Catherine made magnificent with splendid fêtes, enabled her to gather about her the leaders of the various parties. Having studied all interests and all factions, she found herself with two alternatives from which to choose; either to rally them all to the throne, or to pit them one against another. The Connétable de Montmorency, supremely Catholic, whose nephew, the Prince de Condé, was leader of the Reformers, and whose sons were inclined to the new religion, blamed the alliance of the queen-mother with the Reformation. The Guises, on their side, were endeavoring to gain over Antoine de Bourbon, king of Navarre, a weak prince; a manœuvre which his wife, Jeanne d'Albret, instructed by de Bèze, allowed to succeed. The difficulties were plain to Catherine, whose dawning power needed a period of tranquillity. She therefore impatiently awaited Calvin's reply to the message which the Prince de Condé, the king of Navarre, Coligny, d'Andelot, and the Cardinal de Châtillon had sent him through de Bèze and Chaudieu. Meantime, however, she was faithful to her promises as to the Prince de Condé. The chan-

cellor put an end to the proceedings in which Christophe was involved by referring the affair to the Parliament of Paris, which at once set aside the judgment of the committee, declaring it without power to try a prince of the blood. The Parliament then reopened the trial, at the request of the Guises and the queen-mother. Lasagne's papers had already been given to Catherine, who burned them. The giving up of these papers was a first pledge, uselessly made by the Guises to the queen-mother. The Parliament, no longer able to take cognizance of those decisive proofs, reinstated the prince in all his rights, property, and honors. Christophe, released during the tumult at Orléans on the death of the king, was acquitted in the first instance, and appointed, in compensation for his sufferings, solicitor to the Parliament, at the request of his godfather Monsieur de Thou.

The Triumvirate, that coming coalition of self-interests threatened by Catherine's first acts, was now forming itself under her very eyes. Just as in chemistry antagonistic substances separate at the first shock which jars their enforced union, so in politics the alliance of opposing interests never lasts. Catherine thoroughly understood that sooner or later she should return to the Guises and combine with them and the Connétable to do battle against the Huguenots. The proposed "colloquy" which tempted the vanity of the orators of all parties, and offered an imposing spectacle to succeed that of the coronation and enliven the bloody ground of a religious war which, in point of fact, had already begun, was as futile in the eyes of the Duc de Guise as in those of Catherine. The Catholics

would, in one sense be worsted; for the Huguenots, under pretext of conferring, would be able to proclaim their doctrine, with the sanction of the king and his mother, to the ears of all France. The Cardinal de Lorraine, flattered by Catherine into the idea of destroying the heresy by the eloquence of the Church, persuaded his brother to consent; and thus the queen obtained what was all-essential to her, six months of peace.

A slight event, occurring at this time, came near compromising the power which Catherine had so painfully built up. The following scene, preserved in history, took place, on the very day the envoys returned from Geneva, in the hôtel de Coligny near the Louvre. At his coronation, Charles IX., who was greatly attached to his tutor Amyot, appointed him grand-almoner of France. This affection was shared by his brother the Duc d'Anjou, afterwards Henri III., another of Amyot's pupils. Catherine heard the news of this appointment from the two Gondis during the journey from Rheims to Paris. She had counted on that office in the gift of the Crown to gain a supporter in the Church with whom to oppose the Cardinal de Lorraine. Her choice had fallen on the Cardinal de Tournon, in whom she expected to find, as in l'Hôpital, another *crutch* — the word is her own. As soon as she reached the Louvre she sent for the tutor, and her anger was such, on seeing the disaster to her policy caused by the ambition of this son of a shoemaker, that she was betrayed into using the following extraordinary language, which several memoirs of the day have handed down to us: —

“What!” she cried, “am I, who compel the Guises,

the Colignys, the Connétables, the house of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, to serve my ends, am I to be opposed by a priestling like you who are not satisfied to be bishop of Auxerre?"

Amyot excused himself. He assured the queen that he had asked nothing; the king of his own will had given him the office of which he, the son of a poor tailor, felt himself quite unworthy.

"Be assured, *maître*," replied Catherine (that being the name which the two kings, Charles IX. and Henri III., gave to the great writer) "that you will not stand on your feet twenty-four hours hence, unless you make your pupil change his mind."

Between the death thus threatened and the resignation of the highest ecclesiastical office in the gift of the crown, the son of the shoemaker, who had lately become extremely eager after honors, and may even have coveted a cardinal's hat, thought it prudent to temporize. He left the court and hid himself in the abbey of Saint-Germain. When Charles IX. did not see him at his first dinner, he asked where he was. Some Guisard doubtless told him of what had occurred between Amyot and the queen-mother.

"Has he been forced to disappear because I made him grand-almoner?" cried the king.

He thereupon rushed to his mother in the violent wrath of angry children when their caprices are opposed.

"Madame," he said on entering, "did I not kindly sign the letter you asked me to send to Parliament, by means of which you govern my kingdom? Did you not promise that if I did so my will should be yours? And here, the first favor that I wish to bestow excites

your jealousy! The chancellor talks of declaring my majority at fourteen, three years from now, and you wish to treat me as a child. By God, I will be king, and a king as my father and my grandfather were kings!"

The tone and manner in which these words were said gave Catherine a revelation of her son's true character; it was like a blow in the breast.

"He speaks to me thus, he whom I made a king!" she thought. "Monsieur," she said aloud, "the office of a king, in times like these, is a very difficult one; you do not yet know the shrewd men with whom you have to deal. You will never have a safer and more sincere friend than your mother, or better servants than those who have been so long attached to her person, without whose services you might perhaps not even exist to-day. The Guises want both your life and your throne, be sure of that. If they could sew me into a sack and fling me into the river," she said, pointing to the Seine, "it would be done to-night. They know that I am a lioness defending her young, and that I alone prevent their daring hands from seizing your crown. To whom—to whose party does your tutor belong? Who are his allies? What authority has he? What services can he do you? What weight do his words carry? Instead of finding a prop to sustain your power, you have cut the ground from under it. The Cardinal de Lorraine is a living threat to you; he plays the king; he keeps his hat on his head before the princes of the blood; it was urgently necessary to invest another cardinal with powers greater than his own. But what have you done? Is Amyot, that shoemaker, fit

only to tie the ribbons of his shoes, is he capable of making head against the Guise ambition? However, you love Amyot, you have appointed him; your will must now be done, monsieur. But before you make such gifts again, I pray you to consult me in affectionate good faith. Listen to reasons of state; and your own good sense as a child may perhaps agree with my old experience, when you really understand the difficulties that lie before you."

"Then I can have my master back again?" cried the king, not listening to his mother's words, which he considered to be mere reproaches.

"Yes, you shall have him," she replied. "But it is not he, nor that brutal Cypierre who will teach you how to reign."

"It is for you to do so, my dear mother," said the boy, mollified by his victory and relaxing the surly and threatening look stamped by nature on his countenance.

Catherine sent Gondi to recall the new grand-almoner. When the Italian discovered the place of Amyot's retreat, and the bishop heard that the courtier was sent by the queen, he was seized with terror and refused to leave the abbey. In this extremity Catherine was obliged to write to him herself, in such terms that he returned to Paris and received from her own lips the assurance of her protection, — on condition, however, that he would blindly promote her wishes with Charles IX.

This little domestic tempest over, the queen, now re-established in the Louvre after an absence of more than a year, held council with her closest friends as to the proper conduct to pursue with the young king, whom Cypierre had complimented on his firmness.

"What is best to be done?" she said to the two Gondis, Ruggiero, Birago, and Chiverni who had lately become governor and chancellor to the Duc d'Anjou.

"Before all else," replied Birago, "get rid of Cypierre. He is not a courtier; he will never accommodate himself to your ideas, and will think he does his duty in thwarting you."

"Whom can I trust?" cried the queen.

"One of us," said Birago.

"On my honor!" exclaimed Gondi, "I'll promise you to make the king as docile as the king of Navarre."

"You allowed the late king to perish to save your other children," said Albert de Gondi. "Do, then, as the great signors of Constantinople do, — divert the anger and amuse the caprices of the present king. He loves art and poetry and hunting, also a little girl he saw at Orléans; *there's* occupation enough for him."

"Would you really be the king's governor?" said Catherine to the ablest of the Gondis.

"Yes, if you will give me the necessary authority; you may even be obliged to make me marshal of France and a duke. Cypierre is altogether too small a man to hold the office. In future, the governor of a king of France should be of some great dignity, like that of duke and marshal."

"He is right," said Birago.

"Poet and huntsman," said Catherine in a dreamy tone.

"We will hunt and make love!" cried Gondi.

"Moreover," remarked Chiverni, "you are sure of Amyot, who will always fear poison in case of disobedience; so that you and he and Gondi can hold the king in leading-strings."

"Amyot has deeply offended me," said Catherine.

"He does not know what he owes to you; if he did know, you would be in danger," replied Birago, gravely, emphasizing his words.

"Then, it is agreed," exclaimed Catherine, on whom Birago's reply made a powerful impression, "that you, Gondi, are to be the king's governor. My son must consent to do for one of my friends a favor equal to the one I have just permitted for his knave of a bishop. That fool has lost the hat; for never, as long as I live, will I consent that the pope shall give it to him! How strong we might have been with Cardinal de Tournon! What a trio with Tournon for grand-almoner, and l'Hôpital, and de Thou! As for the burghers of Paris, I intend to make my son cajole them; we will get a support there."

Accordingly, Albert de Gondi became a marshal of France and was created Duc de Retz and governor of the king a few days later.

At the moment when this little private council ended, Cardinal de Tournon announced to the queen the arrival of the emissaries sent to Calvin. Admiral Coligny accompanied the party in order that his presence might ensure them due respect at the Louvre. The queen gathered the formidable phalanx of her maids of honor about her, and passed into the reception hall, built by her husband, which no longer exists in the Louvre of to-day.

At the period of which we write the staircase of the Louvre occupied the clock tower. Catherine's apartments were in the old buildings which still exist in the court of the Musée. The present staircase of the mu-

seum was built in what was formerly the *salle des ballets*. The ballet of those days was a sort of dramatic entertainment performed by the whole court.

Revolutionary passions gave rise to a most laughable error about Charles IX., in connection with the Louvre. During the Revolution hostile opinions as to this king, whose real character was masked, made a monster of him. Joseph Chénier's tragedy was written under the influence of certain words scratched on the window of the projecting wing of the Louvre, looking toward the quay. The words were as follows: "It was from this window that Charles IX., of execrable memory, fired upon French citizens." It is well to inform future historians and all sensible persons that this portion of the Louvre — called to-day the old Louvre — which projects upon the quay and is connected with the Louvre by the room called the Apollo gallery (while the great halls of the Museum connect the Louvre with the Tuileries) did not exist in the time of Charles IX. The greater part of the space where the frontage on the quay now stands, and where the Garden of the Infanta is laid out, was then occupied by the hôtel de Bourbon, which belonged to and was the residence of the house of Navarre. It was absolutely impossible, therefore, for Charles IX. to fire from the Louvre of Henry II. upon a boat full of Huguenots crossing the river, although *at the present time* the Seine can be seen from its windows. Even if learned men and libraries did not possess maps of the Louvre made in the time of Charles IX., on which its then position is clearly indicated, the building itself refutes the error. All the kings who co-operated in the work of

erecting this enormous mass of buildings never failed to put their initials or some special monogram on the parts they had severally built. Now the part we speak of, the venerable and now blackened wing of the Louvre, projecting on the quay and overlooking the garden of the Infanta, bears the monograms of Henri III. and Henri IV., which are totally different from that of Henri II., who invariably joined his H to the two C's of Catherine, forming a D, — which, by the bye, has constantly deceived superficial persons into fancying that the king put the initial of his mistress, Diane, on great public buildings. Henri IV. united the Louvre with his own hôtel de Bourbon, its garden and dependencies. He was the first to think of connecting Catherine de' Medici's palace of the Tuileries with the Louvre by his unfinished galleries, the precious sculptures of which have been so cruelly neglected. Even if the map of Paris, and the monograms of Henri III. and Henri IV. did not exist, the difference of architecture is refutation enough to the calumny. The vermiculated stone copings of the hôtel de la Force mark the transition between what is called the architecture of the Renaissance and that of Henri III., Henri IV., and Louis XIII. This archæological digression (continuing the sketches of old Paris with which we began this history) enables us to picture to our minds the then appearance of this other corner of the old city, of which nothing now remains but Henri IV.'s addition to the Louvre, with its admirable bas-reliefs, now being rapidly annihilated.

When the court heard that the queen was about to give an audience to Théodore de Bèze and Chaudieu, presented by Admiral Coligny, all the courtiers

who had the right of entrance to the reception hall, hastened thither to witness the interview. It was about six o'clock in the evening; Coligny had just supped, and was using a toothpick as he came up the staircase of the Louvre between the two Reformers. The practice of using a toothpick was so inveterate a habit with the admiral that he was seen to do it on the battle-field while planning a retreat. "Distrust the admiral's toothpick, the *No* of the Connétable, and Catherine's *Yes*," was a court proverb of that day. After the Saint-Bartholomew the populace made a horrible jest on the body of Coligny, which hung for three days at Mont-faucon, by putting a grotesque toothpick into his mouth. History has recorded this atrocious levity. So petty an act done in the midst of that great catastrophe pictures the Parisian populace, which deserves the sarcastic jibe of Boileau: "Frenchmen, born *malin*, created the guilotine." The Parisian of all time cracks jokes and makes lampoons before, during, and after the most horrible revolutions.

Théodore de Bèze wore the dress of a courtier, black silk stockings, low shoes with straps across the instep, tight breeches, a black silk doublet with slashed sleeves, and a small black velvet mantle, over which lay an elegant white fluted ruff. His beard was trimmed to a moustache and *virgule* (now called imperial) and he carried a sword at his side and a cane in his hand. Whosoever knows the galleries of Versailles or the collections of Odieuvre, knows also his round, almost jovial face and lively eyes, surmounted by the broad forehead which characterized the writers and poets of that day. De Bèze had, what served him admirably, an agreeable

air and manner. In this he was a great contrast to Coligny, of austere countenance, and to the sour, bilious Chaudieu, who chose to wear on this occasion the robe and bands of a Calvinist minister.

The scenes that happen in our day in the Chamber of Deputies, and which, no doubt, happened in the Convention, will give an idea of how, at this court, at this epoch, these men, who six months later were to fight to the death in a war without quarter, could meet and talk to each other with courtesy and even laughter. Birago, who was coldly to advise the Saint-Bartholomew, and Cardinal de Lorraine, who charged his servant Besme "not to miss the admiral," now advanced to meet Coligny; Birago saying, with a smile:—

"Well, my dear admiral, so you have really taken upon yourself to present these gentlemen from Geneva?"

"Perhaps you will call it a crime in *me*," replied the admiral, jesting, "whereas if you had done it yourself you would make a merit of it."

"They say that the *Sieur Calvin* is very ill," remarked the Cardinal de Lorraine to Théodore de Bèze. "I hope no one suspects us of giving him his broth."

"Ah! monseigneur; it would be too great a risk," replied de Bèze, maliciously.

The Duc de Guise, who was watching Chaudieu, looked fixedly at his brother and at Birago, who were both taken aback by de Bèze's answer.

"Good God!" remarked the cardinal, "heretics are not diplomatic!"

To avoid embarrassment, the queen, who was announced at this moment, had arranged to remain standing during the audience. She began by speaking to

the Connétable, who had previously remonstrated with her vehemently on the scandal of receiving messengers from Calvin.

"You see, my dear Connétable," she said, "that I receive them without ceremony."

"Madame," said the admiral, approaching the queen, "these are two teachers of the new religion, who have come to an understanding with Calvin, and who have his instructions as to a conference in which the churches of France may be able to settle their differences."

"This is Monsieur de Bèze, to whom my wife is much attached," said the king of Navarre, coming forward and taking de Bèze by the hand.

"And this is Chaudieu," said the Prince de Condé. "*My friend* the Duc de Guise knows the soldier," he added, looking at Le Balafre, "perhaps he will now like to know the minister."

This gasconade made the whole court laugh, even Catherine.

"Faith!" replied the Duc de Guise, "I am enchanted to see a *gars* who knows so well how to choose his men and to employ them in their right sphere. One of your agents," he said to Chaudieu, "actually endured the extraordinary question without dying and without confessing a single thing. I call myself brave; but I don't know that I could have endured it as he did."

"Hum!" muttered Ambroise, "you did not say a word when I pulled the javelin out of your face at Calais."

Catherine, standing at the centre of a semicircle of the courtiers and maids of honor, kept silence. She

was observing the two Reformers, trying to penetrate their minds as, with the shrewd, intelligent glance of her black eyes, she studied them.

“One seems to be the scabbard, the other the blade,” whispered Albert de Gondi in her ear.

“Well, gentlemen,” said Catherine at last, unable to restrain a smile, “has your master given you permission to unite in a public conference, at which you will be converted by the arguments of the Fathers of the Church who are the glory of our State?”

“We have no master but the Lord,” said Chaudieu.

“But surely you will allow some little authority to the king of France?” said Catherine, smiling.

“And much to the queen,” said de Bèze, bowing low.

“You will find,” continued the queen, “that our most submissive subjects are heretics.”

“Ah, madame!” cried Coligny, “we will indeed endeavor to make you a noble and a peaceful kingdom! Europe has profited, alas! by our internal divisions. For the last fifty years she has had the advantage of one-half of the French people being against the other half.”

“Are we here to sing anthems to the glory of heretics,” said the Connétable, brutally.

“No, but to bring them to repentance,” whispered the Cardinal de Lorraine in his ear; “we want to coax them by a little sugar.”

“Do you know what I should have done under the late king?” said the Connétable, angrily. “I’d have called in the provost and hung those two knaves, then and there, on the gallows of the Louvre.”

"Well, gentlemen, who are the learned men whom you have selected as our opponents?" inquired the queen, imposing silence on the Connétable by a look.

"Duplessis-Mornay and Théodore de Bèze will speak on our side," replied Chaudieu.

"The court will doubtless go to Saint-Germain, and as it would be improper that this *colloquy* should take place in a royal residence, we will have it in the little town of Poissy," said Catherine.

"Shall we be safe there, madame?" asked Chaudieu.

"Ah!" replied the queen, with a sort of naïveté, "you will surely know how to take precautions. The Admiral will arrange all that with my cousins the Guises and de Montmorency."

"The devil take them!" cried the Connétable, "I'll have nothing to do with it!"

"How do you contrive to give such strength of character to your converts?" said the queen, leading Chaudieu apart. "The son of my furrier was actually sublime."

"We have faith," replied Chaudieu.

At this moment the hall presented a scene of animated groups, all discussing the question of the proposed assembly, to which the few words said by the queen had already given the name of the "Colloquy of Poissy." Catherine glanced at Chaudieu and was able to say to him unheard:—

"Yes, a new faith!"

"Ah, madame, if you were not blinded by your alliance with the court of Rome, you would see that we are returning to the true doctrines of Jesus Christ, who, recognizing the equality of souls, bestows upon all men equal rights on earth."

“Do you think yourself the equal of Calvin?” asked the queen, shrewdly. “No, no; we are equals only in church. What! would you unbind the tie of the people to the throne?” she cried. “Then you are not only heretics, you are revolutionists, — rebels against obedience to the king as you are against that to the pope!” So saying, she left Chaudieu abruptly and returned to Théodore de Bèze. “I count on you, monsieur,” she said, “to conduct this colloquy in good faith. Take all the time you need.”

“I had supposed,” said Chaudieu to the Prince de Condé, the King of Navarre, and Admiral Coligny, as they left the hall, “that a great State matter would be treated more seriously.”

“Oh! we know very well what you want,” exclaimed the Prince de Condé, exchanging a sly look with Théodore de Bèze.

The prince now left his adherents to attend a rendezvous. This great leader of a party was also one of the most favored gallants of the court. The two choice beauties of that day were even then striving with such desperate eagerness for his affections that one of them, the Maréchale de Saint-André, the wife of the future triumvir, gave him her beautiful estate of Saint-Valéry, hoping to win him away from the Duchesse de Guise, the wife of the man who had tried to take his head on the scaffold. The duchess, not being able to detach the Duc de Nemours from Mademoiselle de Rohan, fell in love, *en attendant*, with the leader of the Reformers.

“What a contrast to Geneva!” said Chaudieu to Théodore de Bèze, as they crossed the little bridge of the Louvre.

“The people here are certainly gayer than the Genevese. I don't see why they should be so treacherous,” replied de Bèze.

“To treachery oppose treachery,” replied Chaudieu, whispering the words in his companion's ear. “I have *saints* in Paris on whom I can rely, and I intend to make Calvin a prophet. Christophe Lecamus shall deliver us from our most dangerous enemy.”

“The queen-mother, for whom the poor devil endured his torture, has already, with a high hand, caused him to be appointed solicitor to the Parliament; and solicitors make better prosecutors than murderers. Don't you remember how Avenelles betrayed the secrets of our first uprising?”

“I know Christophe,” said Chaudieu, in a positive tone, as he turned to leave the envoy from Geneva.

XV.

COMPENSATION.

A FEW days after the reception of Calvin's emissaries by the queen, that is to say, toward the close of the year (for the year then began at Easter and the present calendar was not adopted until later in the reign of Charles IX.), Christophe reclined in an easy chair beside the fire in the large brown hall, dedicated to family life, that overlooked the river in his father's house, where the present drama was begun. His feet rested on a stool; his mother and Babette Lallier had just renewed the compresses, saturated with a solution brought by Ambroise Paré, who was charged by Catherine de' Medici to take care of the young man. Once restored to his family, Christophe became the object of the most devoted care. Babette, authorized by her father, came every morning and only left the Lecamus house at night. Christophe, the admiration of the apprentices, gave rise throughout the quarter to various tales, which invested him with mysterious poesy. He had borne the worst torture; the celebrated Ambroise Paré was employing all his skill to cure him. What great deed had he done to be thus treated? Neither Christophe nor his father said a word on the subject. Catherine, then all-powerful, was concerned in their silence as well as the Prince de Condé. The constant

visits of Paré, now chief surgeon of both the king and the house of Guise, whom the queen-mother and the Lorrains allowed to treat a youth accused of heresy, strangely complicated an affair through which no one saw clearly. Moreover, the rector of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bœufs came several times to visit the son of his churchwarden, and these visits made the causes of Christophe's present condition still more unintelligible to his neighbors.

The old syndic, who had his plan, gave evasive answers to his brother-furriers, the merchants of the neighborhood, and to all friends who spoke to him of his son: "Yes, I am very thankful to have saved him." — "Well, you know, it wont do to put your finger between the bark and the tree." — "My son touched fire and came near burning up my house." — "They took advantage of his youth; we burghers get nothing but shame and evil by frequenting the grandees." — "This affair decides me to make a lawyer of Christophe; the practice of law will teach him to weigh his words and his acts." — "The young queen, who is now in Scotland, had a great deal to do with it; but then, to be sure, my son may have been imprudent." — "I have had cruel anxieties." — "All this may decide me to give up my business; I do not wish ever to go to court again." — "My son has had enough of the Reformation; it has cracked all his joints. If it had not been for Ambroise, I don't know what would have become of me."

Thanks to these ambiguous remarks and to the great discretion of such conduct, it was generally averred in the neighborhood that Christophe had seen the error of

his ways; everybody thought it natural that the old syndic should wish to get his son appointed to the Parliament, and the rector's visits no longer seemed extraordinary. As the neighbors reflected on the old man's anxieties they no longer thought, as they would otherwise have done, that his ambition was inordinate. The young lawyer, who had lain helpless for months on the bed which his family made up for him in the old hall, was now, for the last week, able to rise and move about by the aid of crutches. Babette's love and his mother's tenderness had deeply touched his heart; and they, while they had him helpless in their hands, lectured him severely on religion. President de Thou paid his godson a visit, during which he showed himself most fatherly. Christophe, being now a solicitor of the Parliament, must of course, he said, be Catholic; his oath would bind him to that; and the president, who assumed not to doubt of his godson's orthodoxy, ended his remarks by saying with great earnestness:

“ My son, you have been cruelly tried. I am myself ignorant of the reasons which made the Messieurs de Guise treat you thus; but I advise you in future to live peacefully, without entering into the troubles of the times; for the favor of the king and queen will not be shown to the makers of revolt. You are not important enough to play fast and loose with the king as the Guises do. If you wish to be some day counsellor to the Parliament remember that you cannot obtain that noble office unless by a real and serious attachment to the royal cause.”

Nevertheless, neither President de Thou's visit, nor the seductions of Babette, nor the urgency of his mother

were sufficient to shake the constancy of the martyr of the Reformation. Christophe held to his religion all the more because he had suffered for it.

"My father will never let me marry a heretic," whispered Babette in his ear.

Christophe answered only by tears, which made the young girl silent and thoughtful.

Old Lecamus maintained his paternal and magisterial dignity; he observed his son and said little. The stern old man, after recovering his dear Christophe, was dissatisfied with himself; he repented the tenderness he had shown for this only son; but he admired him secretly. At no period of his life did the syndic pull more wires to reach his ends, for he saw the field ripe for the harvest so painfully sown, and he wanted to gather the whole of it. Some days before the morning of which we write, he had had, being alone with Christophe, a long conversation with him in which he endeavored to discover the secret reason of the young man's resistance. Christophe, who was not without ambition, betrayed his faith in the Prince de Condé. The generous promise of the prince, who, of course, was only exercising his profession of prince, remained graven on his heart; little did he think that Condé had sent him, mentally, to the devil in Orléans, muttering, "A Gascon would have understood me better," when Christophe called out a touching farewell as the prince passed the window of his dungeon.

But besides this sentiment of admiration for the prince, Christophe had also conceived a profound reverence for the great queen, who had explained to him by a single look the necessity which compelled her to

sacrifice him ; and who during his agony had given him an illimitable promise in a single tear. During the silent months of his weakness, as he lay there waiting for recovery, he had thought over each event at Blois and at Orléans. He weighed, one might almost say in spite of himself, the relative worth of these two protections. He floated between the queen and the prince. He had certainly served Catherine more than he had served the Reformation, and in a young man both heart and mind would naturally incline toward the queen ; less because she was a queen than because she was a woman. Under such circumstances a man will always hope more from a woman than from a man.

“ I sacrificed myself for her ; what will she do for me ? ”

This question Christophe put to himself almost involuntarily as he remembered the tone in which she had said the words, *Povero mio !* It is difficult to believe how egotistical a man can become when he lies on a bed of sickness. Everything, even the exclusive devotion of which he is the object, drives him to think only of himself. By exaggerating in his own mind the obligations which the Prince de Condé was under to him he had come to expect that some office would be given to him at the court of Navarre. Still new to the world of political life, he forgot its contending interests and the rapid march of events which control and force the hand of all leaders of parties ; he forgot it the more because he was practically a prisoner in solitary confinement on his bed in that old brown room. Each party is, necessarily, ungrateful while the struggle lasts ; when it triumphs it has too many persons to reward not to be

ungrateful still. Soldiers submit to this ingratitude; but their leaders turn against the new master at whose side they have acted and suffered like equals for so long. Christophe, who alone remembered his sufferings, felt himself already among the leaders of the Reformation by the fact of his martyrdom. His father, that old fox of commerce, so shrewd, so perspicacious, ended by divining the secret thoughts of his son; consequently, all his manœuvres were now based on the natural expectancy to which Christophe had yielded himself.

"Would n't it be a fine thing," he had said to Babette, in presence of the family a few days before his interview with his son, "to be the wife of a counsellor of the Parliament? You would be called *madame*!"

"You are crazy, *compère*," said Lallier. "Where would you get ten thousand crowns' income from landed property, which a counsellor must have, according to law; and from whom could you buy the office? No one but the queen-mother and regent could help your son into Parliament, and I'm afraid he's too tainted with the new opinions for that."

"What would you pay to see your daughter the wife of a counsellor?"

"Ah! you want to look into my purse, shrewd-head!" said Lallier.

Counsellor to the Parliament! The words worked powerfully in Christophe's brain.

Sometime after this conversation, one morning when Christophe was gazing at the river and thinking of the scene which began this history, of the Prince de Condé, Chaudieu, La Renaudie, of his journey to Blois,—in short, the whole story of his hopes,—his father came

and sat down beside him, scarcely concealing a joyful thought beneath a serious manner.

"My son," he said, "after what passed between you and the leaders of the Tumult of Amboise, they owe you enough to make the care of your future incumbent on the house of Navarre."

"Yes," replied Christophe.

"Well," continued his father, "I have asked their permission to buy a legal practice for you in the province of Béarn. Our good friend Paré undertook to present the letters which I wrote on your behalf to the Prince de Condé and the queen of Navarre. Here, read the answer of Monsieur de Pibrac, vice-chancellor of Navarre:—

TO THE SIEUR LECAMUS, *syndic of the guild of furriers* :

Monseigneur le Prince de Condé desires me to express his regret that he cannot do what you ask for his late companion in the tower of Saint-Aignan, whom he perfectly remembers, and to whom, meanwhile, he offers the place of gendarme in his company; which will put your son in the way of making his mark as a man of courage, which he is.

The queen of Navarre awaits an opportunity to reward the Sieur Christophe, and will not fail to take advantage of it.

Upon which, Monsieur le syndic, we pray God to have you in His keeping.

AT NÉRAC.

PIBRAC,
Chancellor of Navarre.

"Nérac, Pibrac, crack!" cried Babette. "There's no confidence to be placed in Gascons; they think only of themselves."

Old Lecamus looked at his son, smiling scornfully.

"They propose to put on horseback a poor boy whose knees and ankles were shattered for their sakes!" cried the mother. "What a wicked jest!"

"I shall never see you a counsellor of Navarre," said his father.

"I wish I knew what Queen Catherine would do for me, if I made a claim upon her," said Christophe, cast down by the prince's answer.

"She made you no promise," said the old man, "but I am certain that *she* will never mock you like these others; she will remember your sufferings. Still, how can the queen make a counsellor of the Parliament out of a Protestant burgher?"

"But Christophe has not abjured!" cried Babette. "He can very well keep his private opinions secret."

"The Prince de Condé would be less disdainful of a counsellor of the Parliament," said Lallier.

"Well, what say you, Christophe?" urged Babette.

"You are counting without the queen," replied the young lawyer.

A few days after this rather bitter disillusion, an apprentice brought Christophe the following laconic little missive:—

"Chaudieu wishes to see his son."

"Let him come in!" cried Christophe.

"Oh! my sacred martyr!" said the minister, embracing him; "have you recovered from your sufferings?"

"Yes, thanks to Paré."

"Thanks rather to God who gave you the strength to endure the torture. But what is this I hear? Have you allowed them to make you a solicitor? Have

you taken the oath of fidelity? Surely you will not recognise that prostitute, the Roman, Catholic, and apostolic Church?"

"My father wished it."

"But ought we not to leave fathers and mothers and wives and children, all, all, for the sacred cause of Calvinism; nay, must we not suffer all things? Ah! Christophe, Calvin, the great Calvin, the whole party, the whole world, the Future counts upon your courage and the grandeur of your soul. We want your life."

It is a remarkable fact in the mind of man that the most devoted spirits, even while devoting themselves, build romantic hopes upon their perilous enterprises. When the prince, the soldier, and the minister had asked Christophe, under the bridge, to convey to Catherine the treaty which, if discovered, would in all probability cost him his life, the lad had relied upon his nerve, upon chance, upon the powers of his mind, and confident in such hopes he bravely, nay, audaciously put himself between those terrible adversaries, the Guises and Catherine. During the torture he still kept saying to himself: "I shall come out of it! it is only pain!" But when this second and brutal demand, "Die; we want your life," was made upon a boy who was still almost helpless, scarcely recovered from his late torture, and clinging all the more to life because he had just seen death so near, it was impossible for him to launch into further illusions.

Christophe answered quietly: —

"What is it now?"

"To fire a pistol courageously, as Stuart did on Minard."

"On whom?"

"The Duc de Guise."

"A murder?"

"A vengeance. Have you forgotten the hundred gentlemen massacred on the scaffold at Amboise? A child who saw that butchery, the little d'Aubigné cried out, 'They have slaughtered France!'"

"You should receive the blows of others and give none; that is the religion of the gospel," said Christophe. "If you imitate the Catholics in their cruelty, of what good is it to reform the Church?"

"Oh! Christophe, they have made you a lawyer, and now you argue!" said Chaudieu.

"No, my friend," replied the young man, "but parties are ungrateful; and you will be, both you and yours, nothing more than puppets of the Bourbons."

"Christophe, if you could hear Calvin, you would know how we wear them like gloves! The Bourbons are the gloves, we are the hand."

"Read that," said Christophe, giving Chaudieu Pibrac's letter containing the answer of the Prince de Condé.

"Oh! my son; you are ambitious, you can no longer make the sacrifice of yourself! — I pity you!"

With those fine words Chaudieu turned and left him.

Some days after that scene, the Lallier family and the Lecamus family were gathered together in honor of the formal betrothal of Christophe and Babette, in the old brown hall, from which Christophe's bed had been removed; for he was now able to drag himself about and even mount the stairs without his crutches. It was nine o'clock in the evening and the company were await-

ing Ambroise Pare. The family notary sat before a table on which lay various contracts. The furrier was selling his house and business to his head-clerk, who was to pay down forty thousand francs for the house and then mortgage it as security for the payment of the goods, for which, however, he paid twenty thousand francs on account.

Lecamus was also buying for his son a magnificent stone house, built by Philibert de l'Orme in the rue Saint-Pierre-aux-Bœufs, which he gave to Christophe as a marriage portion. He also took two hundred thousand francs from his own fortune, and Lallier gave as much more, for the purchase of a fine seignorial manor in Picardy, the price of which was five hundred thousand francs. As this manor was a tenure from the Crown it was necessary to obtain letters-patent (called *rescriptions*) granted by the king, and also to make payment to the Crown of considerable feudal dues. The marriage had been postponed until this royal favor was obtained. Though the burghers of Paris had lately acquired the right to purchase manors, the wisdom of the privy council had been exercised in putting certain restrictions on the sale of those estates which were dependencies of the Crown ; and the one which old Lecamus had had in his eye for the last dozen years was among them. Ambroise was pledged to bring the royal ordinance that evening ; and the old furrier went and came from the hall to the door in a state of impatience which showed how great his long-repressed ambition had been. Ambroise at last appeared.

“ My old friend ! ” cried the surgeon, in an agitated manner, with a glance at the supper table, “ let me see

your linen. Good. Oh! you must have wax-candles. Quick, quick! get out your best things!"

"Why? what is it all about?" asked the rector of Saint-Pierre-aux-Bœufs.

"The queen-mother and the young king are coming to sup with you," replied the surgeon. "They are only waiting for an old counsellor who agreed to sell his place to Christophe, and with whom Monsieur de Thou has concluded a bargain. Don't appear to know anything; I have escaped from the Louvre to warn you."

In a second the whole family were astir; Christophe's mother and Babette's aunt bustled about with the celerity of housekeepers suddenly surprised. But in spite of the apparent confusion into which the news had thrown the entire family, the preparations were promptly made, with an activity that was nothing short of marvellous. Christophe, amazed and confounded by such a favor, was speechless, gazing mechanically at what went on.

"The queen and the king here in our house!" said the old mother.

"The queen!" repeated Babette. "What must we say and do?"

In less than an hour all was changed; the hall was decorated; the supper-table sparkled. Presently the noise of horses sounded in the street. The light of torches carried by the horsemen of the escort brought all the burghers of the neighborhood to their windows. The noise soon subsided and the escort rode away, leaving the queen-mother and her son, King Charles IX., Charles de Gondi, now Grand-master of the wardrobe and governor of the king, Monsieur de Thou, Pinard,

secretary of State, the old counsellor, and two pages, under the arcade before the door.

“My worthy people,” said the queen as she entered, “the king, my son, and I have come to sign the marriage-contract of the son of my furrier, — but only on condition that he remains a Catholic. A man must be a Catholic to enter Parliament; he must be a Catholic to own land which derives from the Crown; he must be a Catholic if he would sit at the king’s table. That is so, is it not, Pinard?”

The secretary of State entered and showed the letters-patent.

“If we are not all Catholics,” said the little king, “Pinard will throw those papers into the fire. But we are all Catholics here, I think,” he continued, casting his somewhat haughty eyes over the company.

“Yes, sire,” replied Christophe, bending his injured knees with difficulty, and kissing the hand which the king held out to him.

Queen Catherine stretched out her hand to Christophe and, raising him hastily, drew him aside into a corner, saying in a low voice: —

“Ah ça! my lad, no evasions here. Are you playing above-board now?”

“Yes, madame,” he answered, won by the dazzling reward and the honor done him by the grateful queen.

“Very good. Monsieur Lecamus, the king, my son, and I permit you to purchase the office of the goodman Groslay, counsellor of the Parliament, here present. Young man, you will follow, I hope, in the steps of your predecessor.”

De Thou advanced and said: “I will answer for him, madame.

"Very well; draw up the deed, notary," said Pinard.

"Inasmuch as the king our master does us the favor to sign my daughter's marriage contract," cried Lallier, "I will pay the whole price of the manor."

"The ladies may sit down," said the young king, graciously: "As a wedding present to the bride I remit, with my mother's consent, all my dues and rights in the manor."

Old Lecamus and Lallier fell on their knees and kissed the king's hand.

"*Mordieu!* sire, what quantities of money these burghers have!" whispered de Gondi in his ear.

The young king laughed.

"As their Highnesses are so kind," said old Lecamus, "will they permit me to present to them my successor, and ask them to continue to him the royal patent of furrier to their Majesties?"

"Let us see him," said the king.

Lecamus led forward his successor, who was livid with fear.

"If my mother consents, we will now sit down to table," said the little king.

Old Lecamus had bethought him of presenting to the king a silver goblet which he had bought of Benvenuto Cellini when the latter stayed in Paris at the hôtel de Nesle. This treasure of art had cost the furrier no less than two thousand crowns.

"Oh! my dear mother, see this beautiful work!" cried the young king, lifting the goblet by its stem.

"It was made in Florence," replied Catherine.

"Pardon me, madame," said Lecamus, "it was made in Paris by a Florentine. All that is made in Florence

would belong to your Majesty ; that which is made in France is the king's."

"I accept it, my good man," cried Charles IX. ; "and it shall henceforth be my particular drinking cup.

"It is beautiful enough," said the queen, examining the masterpiece, "to be included among the crown-jewels. Well, Maître Ambroise," she whispered in the surgeon's ear, with a glance at Christophe, "have you taken good care of him? Will he walk again?"

"He will run," replied the surgeon, smiling. "Ah! you have cleverly made him a renegade."

"Ha!" said the queen, with the levity for which she has been blamed, though it was only on the surface, "the Church won't stand still for want of one monk!"

The supper was gay; the queen thought Babette pretty, and, in the regal manner which was natural to her, she slipped upon the girl's finger a diamond ring which compensated in value for the goblet bestowed upon the king. Charles IX., who afterwards became rather too fond of these invasions of burgher homes, supped with a good appetite. Then, at a word from his new governor (who, it is said, was instructed to make him forget the virtuous teachings of Cypierre), he obliged all the men present to drink so deeply that the queen, observing that the gayety was about to become too noisy, rose to leave the room. As she rose, Christophe, his father, and the two women took torches and accompanied her to the shop-door. There Christophe ventured to touch the queen's wide sleeve and to make her a sign that he had something to say. Catherine stopped, made a gesture to the father and the two women to leave her, and said, turning to Christophe :

“What is it?”

“It may serve you to know, madame,” replied Christophe, whispering in her ear, “that the Duc de Guise is being followed by assassins.”

“You are a loyal subject,” said Catherine, smiling, “and I shall never forget you.”

She held out to him her hand, so celebrated for its beauty, first ungloving it, which was indeed a mark of favor, — so much so that Christophe, then and there, became altogether royalist as he kissed that adorable hand.

“So they mean to rid me of that bully without my having a finger in it,” thought she as she replaced her glove.

Then she mounted her mule and returned to the Louvre, attended by her two pages.

Christophe went back to the supper-table, but was thoughtful and gloomy even while he drank; the fine, austere face of Ambroise Paré seemed to reproach him for his apostasy. But subsequent events justified the manœuvres of the old syndic. Christophe would certainly not have escaped the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew; his wealth and his landed estates would have made him a mark for the murderers. History has recorded the cruel fate of the wife of Lallier's successor, a beautiful woman, whose naked body hung by the hair for three days from one of the buttresses of the Pont au Change. Babette trembled as she thought that she, too, might have endured the same treatment if Christophe had continued a Calvinist, — for such became the name of the Reformers. Calvin's personal ambition was thus gratified, though not until after his death.

Such was the origin of the celebrated parliamentary house of Lecamus. Tallemant des Réaux is in error when he states that they came originally from Picardy. It is only true that the Lecamus family found it for their interest in after days to date from the time the old furrier bought their principal estate, which, as we have said, was situated in Picardy. Christophe's son, who succeeded him under Louis XIII., was the father of the rich president Lecamus who built, in the reign of Louis XIV., that magnificent mansion which shares with the hôtel Lambert the admiration of Parisians and foreigners, and was assuredly one of the finest buildings in Paris. It may still be seen in the rue Thorigny, though at the beginning of the Revolution it was pillaged as having belonged to Monsieur de Juigné, the archbishop of Paris. All the decorations were then destroyed ; and the tenants who lodge there have greatly damaged it ; nevertheless this palace, which is reached through the old house in the rue de la Pelleterie, still shows the noble results obtained in former days by the spirit of family. It may be doubted whether modern individualism, brought about by the equal division of inheritances, will ever raise such noble buildings.

PART SECOND.

THE SECRETS OF THE RUGGIERI.

I.

THE COURT UNDER CHARLES IX.

BETWEEN eleven o'clock and midnight toward the end of October, 1573, two Italians, Florentines and brothers, Albert de Gondi, Duc de Retz and marshal of France, and Charles de Gondi la Tour, Grand-master of the robes of Charles IX., were sitting on the roof of a house in the rue Saint-Honoré, at the edge of a gutter. This gutter was one of those stone channels which in former days were constructed below the roofs of houses to receive the rain-water, discharging it at regular intervals through those long gargoyles carved in the shape of fantastic animals with gaping mouths. In spite of the zeal with which our present generation pulls down and demolishes venerable buildings, there still existed many of these projecting gutters until, quite recently, an ordinance of the police as to water-conduits compelled them to disappear. But even so, a few of these carved gargoyles still remain, chiefly in the *quartier* Saint-Antoine, where low rents and values hinder the building of new storeys under the eaves of the roofs.

It certainly seems strange that two personages invested with such important offices should be playing the part of cats. But whosoever will burrow into the historic treasures of those days, when personal interests jostled and thwarted each other around the throne till the whole political centre of France was like a skein of tangled thread, will readily understand that the two Florentines were cats indeed, and very much in their places in a gutter. Their devotion to the person of the queen-mother, Catherine de' Medici — who had brought them to the court of France and foisted them into their high offices — compelled them not to recoil before any of the consequences of their intrusion. But to explain how and why these courtiers were thus perched, it is necessary to relate a scene which had taken place an hour earlier not far from this very gutter, in that beautiful brown room of the Louvre, all that now remains to us of the apartments of Henri II., in which after supper the courtiers had been paying court to the two queens, Catherine de' Medici and Elizabeth of Austria, and to their son and husband King Charles IX.

In those days the majority of the burghers and great lords supped at six, or at seven o'clock, but the more refined and elegant supped at eight or even nine. This repast was the dinner of to-day. Many persons erroneously believe that etiquette was invented by Louis XIV.; on the contrary it was introduced into France by Catherine de' Medici, who made it so severe that the Connétable de Montmorency had more difficulty in obtaining permission to enter the court of the Louvre on horseback than in winning his sword; moreover, that unheard-of distinction was granted to him only on ac-

count of his great age. Etiquette, which was, it is true, slightly relaxed under the two first Bourbon kings, took an Oriental form under the Great Monarch, for it was introduced from the Eastern Empire, which derived it from Persia. In 1573 few persons had the right to enter the courtyard of the Louvre with their servants and torches (under Louis XIV. the coaches of none but dukes and peers were allowed to pass under the peristyle); moreover, the cost of obtaining entrance after supper to the royal apartments was very heavy. The Maréchal de Retz, whom we have just seen, perched on a gutter, offered on one occasion a thousand crowns of that day, six thousand francs of our present money, to the usher of the king's cabinet to be allowed to speak to Henri III. on a day when he was not on duty. To an historian who knows the truth, it is laughable to see the well-known picture of the courtyard at Blois, in which the artist has introduced a courtier on horseback!

On the present occasion, therefore, none but the most eminent personages in the kingdom were in the royal apartments. The queen, Elizabeth of Austria, and her mother-in-law, Catherine de' Medici, were seated together on the left of the fireplace. On the other side sat the king, buried in an armchair, affecting a lethargy consequent on digestion, — for he had just supped like a prince returned from hunting; possibly he was seeking to avoid conversation in presence of so many persons who were spies upon his thoughts. The courtiers stood erect and uncovered at the end of the room. Some talked in a low voice; others watched the king, awaiting the bestowal of a look or a word. Occasionally one was called up by the queen-mother, who

talked with him for a few moments ; another risked saying a word to the king, who replied with either a nod or a brief sentence. A German nobleman, the Comte de Solern, stood at the corner of the fireplace behind the young queen, the granddaughter of Charles V., whom he had accompanied into France. Near to her on a stool sat her lady of honor, the Comtesse de Fiesque, a Strozzi, and a relation of Catherine de' Medici. The beautiful Madame de Sauves, a descendant of Jacques Cœur, mistress of the king of Navarre, then of the king of Poland, and lastly of the Duc d'Alençon, had been invited to supper ; but she stood like the rest of the court, her husband's rank (that of secretary of State) giving her no right to be seated. Behind these two ladies stood the two Gondis, talking to them. They alone of this dismal assembly were smiling. Albert Gondi, now Duc de Retz, marshal of France, and gentleman of the bed-chamber, had been deputed to marry the queen by proxy at Spire. In the first line of courtiers nearest to the king stood the Maréchal de Tavannes, who was present on court business ; Neufville de Villeroy, one of the ablest bankers of the period, who laid the foundation of the great house of that name ; Birago and Chiverni, gentlemen of the queen-mother, who, knowing her preference for her son Henri (the brother whom Charles IX. regarded as an enemy), attached themselves especially to him ; then Strozzi, Catherine's cousin ; and finally, a number of great lords, among them the old Cardinal de Lorraine and his nephew, the young Duc de Guise, who were held at a distance by the king and his mother. These two leaders of the Holy Alliance, and later of

the League (founded in conjunction with Spain a few years earlier), affected the submission of servants who are only waiting an opportunity to make themselves masters. Catherine and Charles IX. watched each other with close attention.

At this gloomy court, as gloomy as the room in which it was held, each individual had his or her own reasons for being sad or thoughtful. The young queen, Elizabeth, was a prey to the tortures of jealousy, and could ill-disguise them, though she smiled upon her husband, whom she passionately adored, good and pious woman that she was ! Marie Touchet, the only mistress Charles IX. ever had and to whom he was loyally faithful, had lately returned from the château de Fayet in Dauphiné, whither she had gone to give birth to a child. She brought back to Charles IX. a son, his only son, Charles de Valois, first Comte d'Auvergne, and afterward Duc d'Angoulême. The poor queen, in addition to the mortification of her abandonment, now endured the pang of knowing that her rival had borne a son to her husband while she had brought him only a daughter. And these were not her only troubles and disillusions, for Catherine de' Medici, who had seemed her friend in the first instance, now, out of policy, favored her betrayal, preferring to serve the mistress rather than the wife of the king, — for the following reason.

When Charles IX. openly avowed his passion for Marie Touchet, Catherine showed favor to the girl in the interests of her own desire for domination. Marie Touchet, who was very young when brought to court, came at an age when all the noblest sentiments are predominant. She loved the king for himself alone.

Frightened at the fate to which ambition had led the Duchesse de Valentinois (better known as Diane de Poitiers), she dreaded the queen-mother, and greatly preferred her simple happiness to grandeur. Perhaps she thought that lovers as young as the king and herself could never struggle successfully against the queen-mother. As the daughter of Jean Touchet, Sieur de Beauvais and Quillard, she was born between the burgher class and the lower nobility ; she had none of the inborn ambitions of the Pisseleus and Saint-Valliers, girls of rank, who battled for their families with the hidden weapons of love. Marie Touchet, without family or friends, spared Catherine de' Medici all antagonism with her son's mistress ; the daughter of a great house would have been her rival. Jean Touchet, the father, one of the finest wits of the time, a man to whom poets dedicated their works, wanted nothing at court. Marie, a young girl without connections, intelligent and well-educated, and also simple and artless, whose desires would probably never be aggressive to the royal power, suited the queen-mother admirably. In short, she made the parliament recognize the son to whom Marie Touchet had just given birth in the month of April, and she allowed him to take the title of Comte d'Auvergne, assuring Charles IX. that she would leave the boy her personal property, the counties of Auvergne and Languais. At a later period, Marguerite de Valois, queen of Navarre, contested this legacy after she was queen of France, and the Parliament annulled it. But later still, Louis XIII., out of respect for the Valois blood, indemnified the Comte d'Auvergne by the gift of the duchy of Angoulême.

Catherine had already given Marie Touchet, who asked nothing, the manor of Belleville, an estate close to Vincennes which carried no title; and thither she went whenever the king hunted and spent the night at the castle. It was in this gloomy fortress that Charles IX. passed the greater part of his last years, ending his life there, according to some historians, as Louis XII. had ended his.

The queen-mother kept close watch upon her son. All the occupations of his personal life, outside of politics, were reported to her. The king had begun to look upon his mother as an enemy, but the kind intentions she expressed toward his son diverted his suspicions for a time. Catherine's motives in this matter were never understood by Queen Elizabeth, who, according to Brantôme, was one of the gentlest queens that ever reigned, who never did harm or even gave pain to any one, "and was careful to read her prayer-book secretly." But this single-minded princess began at last to see the precipices yawning around the throne, — a dreadful discovery, which might indeed have made her quail; it was some such remembrance, no doubt, that led her to say to one of her ladies, after the death of the king, in reply to a condolence that she had no son, and could not, therefore, be regent and queen-mother:

"Ah! I thank God that I have no son. I know well what would have happened. My poor son would have been despoiled and wronged like the king, my husband, and I should have been the cause of it. God had mercy on the State; he has done all for the best."

This princess, whose portrait Brantôme thinks he draws by saying that her complexion was as beautiful

and delicate as the ladies of her suite were charming and agreeable, and that her figure was fine though rather short, was of little account at her own court. Suffering from a double grief, her saddened attitude added another gloomy tone to a scene which most young queens, less cruelly injured, might have enlivened. The pious Elizabeth proved at this crisis that the qualities which are the shining glory of women in the ordinary ways of life can be fatal to a sovereign. A princess able to occupy herself with other things besides her prayer-book might have been a useful helper to Charles IX., who found no prop to lean on, either in his wife or in his mistress.

The queen-mother, as she sat there in that brown room, was closely observing the king, who, during supper, had exhibited a boisterous good-humor which she felt to be assumed in order to mask some intention against her. This sudden gayety contrasted too vividly with the struggle of mind he endeavored to conceal by his eagerness in hunting, and by an almost maniacal toil at his forge, where he spent many hours in hammering iron; and Catherine was not deceived by it. Without being able even to guess which of the statesmen about the king was employed to prepare or negotiate it (for Charles IX. contrived to mislead his mother's spies), Catherine felt no doubt whatever that some scheme for her overthrow was being planned. The unlooked-for presence of Tavannes, who arrived at the same time as Strozzi, whom she herself had summoned, gave her food for thought. Strong in the strength of her political combination, Catherine was above the reach of circumstances; but she was power

less against some sudden violence. As many persons are ignorant of the actual state of public affairs then so complicated by the various parties that distracted France, the leaders of which had each their private interests to carry out, it is necessary to describe, in a few words, the perilous game in which the queen-mother was now engaged. To show Catherine de' Medici in a new light is, in fact, the root and stock of our present history.

Two words explain this woman, so curiously interesting to study, a woman whose influence has left such deep impressions upon France. Those words are: Power and Astrology. Exclusively ambitious, Catherine de' Medici had no other passion than that of power. Superstitious and fatalistic, like so many superior men, she had no sincere belief except in occult sciences. Unless this double mainspring is known, the conduct of Catherine de' Medici will remain forever misunderstood. As we picture her faith in judicial astrology, the light will fall upon two personages, who are, in fact, the philosophical subjects of this Study.

There lived a man for whom Catherine cared more than for any of her children; his name was Cosmo Ruggiero. He lived in a house belonging to her, the hôtel de Soissons; she made him her supreme adviser. It was his duty to tell her whether the stars ratified the advice and judgment of her ordinary counsellors. Certain remarkable antecedents warranted the power which Cosmo Ruggiero retained over his mistress to her last hour. One of the most learned men of the sixteenth century was physician to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duc d' Urbino, Catherine's father. This physician was called

Ruggiero the Elder (Vecchio Ruggier and Roger l'Ancien in the French authors who have written on alchemy), to distinguish him from his two sons, Lorenzo Ruggiero, called the Great by cabalistic writers, and Cosmo Ruggiero, Catherine's astrologer, also called Roger by several French historians. In France it was the custom to pronounce the name in general as Ruggieri. Ruggiero the elder was so highly valued by the Medici that the two dukes, Cosmo and Lorenzo, stood godfathers to his two sons. He cast, in concert with the famous mathematician, Basilio, the horoscope of Catherine's nativity, in his official capacity as mathematician, astrologer, and physician to the house of Medici; three offices which are often confounded.

At the period of which we write the occult sciences were studied with an ardor that may surprise the incredulous minds of our own age, which is supremely analytical. Perhaps such minds may find in this historical sketch the dawn, or rather the germ, of the positive sciences which have flowered in the nineteenth century, though without the poetic grandeur given to them by the audacious Seekers of the sixteenth, who, instead of using them solely for mechanical industries, magnified Art and fertilized Thought by their means. The protection universally given to occult science by the sovereigns of those days was justified by the noble creations of many inventors, who, starting in quest of the Great Work (the so-called philosophers' stone), attained to astonishing results. At no period were the sovereigns of the world more eager for the study of these mysteries. The Fuggers of Augsburg, in whom all modern Luculluses will recognize their princes, and

all bankers their masters, were gifted with powers of calculation it would be difficult to surpass. Well, those practical men, who loaned the funds of all Europe to the sovereigns of the sixteenth century (as deeply in debt as the kings of the present day), those illustrious guests of Charles V. were sleeping partners in the crucibles of Paracelsus. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Ruggiero the elder was the head of that secret university from which issued the Cardans, the Nostradamuses, and the Agrippas (all in their turn physicians of the house of Valois); also the astronomers, astrologers, and alchemists who surrounded the princes of Christendom and were more especially welcomed and protected in France by Catherine de' Medici. In the nativity drawn by Basilio and Ruggiero the elder, the principal events of Catherine's life were foretold with a correctness which is quite disheartening for those who deny the power of occult science. This horoscope predicted the misfortunes which during the siege of Florence imperilled the beginning of her life; also her marriage with a son of the king of France, the unexpected succession of that son to his father's throne, the birth of her children, their number, and the fact that three of her sons would be kings in succession, that two of her daughters would be queens, and that all of them were destined to die without posterity. This prediction was so fully realized that many historians have assumed that it was written after the events.

It is well known that Nostradamus took to the château de Chaumont, whither Catherine went after the conspiracy of La Renaudie, a woman who possessed the faculty of reading the future. Now, during the reign

of François II., while the queen had with her her four sons, all young and in good health, and before the marriage of her daughter Elizabeth with Philip II., king of Spain, or that of her daughter Marguerite with Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre (afterward Henri IV.), Nostradamus and this woman reiterated the circumstances formerly predicted in the famous nativity. This woman, who was no doubt gifted with second sight, and who belonged to the great school of Seekers of the Great Work, though the particulars of her life and name are lost to history, stated that the last crowned child would be assassinated. Having placed the queen-mother in front of a magic mirror, in which was reflected a wheel on the several spokes of which were the faces of her children, the sorceress set the wheel revolving, and Catherine counted the number of revolutions which it made. Each revolution was for each son one year of his reign. Henri IV. was also put upon the wheel, which then made twenty-four rounds, and the woman (some historians have said it was a man) told the frightened queen that Henri de Bourbon would be king of France and reign that number of years. From that time forth Catherine de' Medici vowed a mortal hatred to the man whom she knew would succeed the last of her Valois sons, who was to die assassinated. Anxious to know what her own death would be, she was warned to beware of Saint-Germain. Supposing, therefore, that she would be either put to death or imprisoned in the château de Saint-Germain, she would never so much as put her foot there, although that residence was far more convenient for her political plans, owing to its proximity to Paris, than the other castles to which she

retreated with the king during the troubles. When she was taken suddenly ill, a few days after the murder of the Duc de Guise at Blois, she asked the name of the bishop who came to assist her. Being told it was Saint-Germain, she cried out, "I am dead!" and did actually die on the morrow, — having, moreover, lived the exact number of years given to her by all her horoscopes.

These predictions, which were known to the Cardinal de Lorraine, who regarded them as witchcraft, were now in process of realization. François II. had reigned his two revolutions of the wheel, and Charles IX. was now making his last turn. If Catherine said the strange words which history has attributed to her when her son Henri started for Poland, — "You will soon return," — they must be set down to her faith in occult science, and not to the intention of poisoning Charles IX.

Many other circumstances corroborated Catherine's faith in the occult sciences. The night before the tournament at which Henri II. was killed, Catherine saw the fatal blow in a dream. Her astrological council, then composed of Nostradamus and the two Ruggieri, had already predicted to her the death of the king. History has recorded the efforts made by Catherine to persuade her husband not to enter the lists. The prognostic, and the dream produced by the prognostic, were verified. The memoirs of the day relate another fact that was no less singular. The courier who announced the victory of Moncontour arrived in the night, after riding with such speed that he killed three horses. The queen-mother was awakened to receive the news, to which she replied, "I knew it already." In fact,

as Brantôme relates, she had told of her son's triumph the evening before, and narrated several circumstances of the battle. The astrologer of the house of Bourbon predicted that the youngest of all the princes descended from Saint-Louis (the son of Antoine de Bourbon) would ascend the throne of France. This prediction, related by Sully, was accomplished in the precise terms of the horoscope; which led Henri IV. to say that by dint of lying these people sometimes hit the truth. However that may be, if most of the great minds of that epoch believed in this vast science, — called Magic by the masters of judicial astrology, and Sorcery by the public, — they were justified in so doing by the fulfilment of horoscopes.

It was for the use of Cosmo Ruggiero, her mathematician, astronomer, and astrologer, that Catherine de' Medici erected the tower behind the Halle aux Blés, — all that now remains of the hôtel de Soissons. Cosmo Ruggiero possessed, like confessors, a mysterious influence, the possession of which, like them again, sufficed him. He cherished an ambitious thought superior to all vulgar ambitions. This man, whom dramatists and romance-writers depict as a juggler, owned the rich abbey of Saint-Mahé in Lower Brittany, and refused many high ecclesiastical dignities; the gold which the superstitious passions of the age poured into his coffers sufficed for his secret enterprise; and the queen's hand, stretched above his head, preserved every hair of it from danger.

II.

SCHEMES AGAINST SCHEMES.

THE thirst for power which consumed the queen-mother, her desire for dominion, was so great that in order to retain it she had, as we have seen, allied herself to the Guises, those enemies of the throne; to keep the reins of power, now obtained, within her hands, she was using every means, even to the sacrifice of her friends and that of her children. This woman, of whom one of her enemies said at her death, "It is more than a queen, it is monarchy itself that has died," — this woman could not exist without the intrigues of government, as a gambler can live only by the emotions of play. Although she was an Italian of the voluptuous race of the Medici, the Calvinists who calumniated her never accused her of having a lover. A great admirer of the maxim, "Divide to reign," she had learned the art of perpetually pitting one force against another. No sooner had she grasped the reins of power than she was forced to keep up dissensions in order to neutralize the strength of two rival houses, and thus save the Crown. Catherine invented the game of political see-saw (since imitated by all princes who find themselves in a like situation), by instigating, first the Calvinists against the Guises, and then the Guises against the Calvinists. Next, after pitting the two

religions against each other in the heart of the nation, Catherine instigated the Duc d'Anjou against his brother Charles IX. After neutralizing events by opposing them to one another, she neutralized men, by holding the thread of all their interests in her hands. But so fearful a game, which needs the head of a Louis XI. to play it, draws down inevitably the hatred of all parties upon the player, who condemns himself forever to the necessity of conquering; for one lost game will turn every selfish interest into an enemy.

The greater part of the reign of Charles IX. witnessed the triumph of the domestic policy of this astonishing woman. What adroit persuasion must Catherine have employed to have obtained the command of the armies for the Duc d'Anjou under a young and brave king, thirsting for glory, capable of military achievement, generous, and in presence, too, of the Connétable de Montmorency. In the eyes of the statesmen of Europe the Duc d'Anjou had all the honors of the Saint-Bartholomew, and Charles IX. all the odium. After inspiring the king with a false and secret jealousy of his brother, she used that passion to wear out by the intrigues of fraternal jealousy the really noble qualities of Charles IX. Cypierre, the king's first governor, and Amyot, his first tutor, had made him so great a man, they had paved the way for so noble a reign, that the queen-mother began to hate her son as soon as she found reason to fear the loss of the power she had so slowly and so painfully obtained. On these general grounds most historians have believed that Catherine de' Medici felt a preference for Henri III.; but her conduct at the period of which we are now

writing, proves the absolute indifference of her heart toward all her children.

When the Duc d'Anjou went to reign in Poland Catherine was deprived of the instrument by which she had worked to keep the king's passions occupied in domestic intrigues, which neutralized his energy in other directions. She then set up the conspiracy of La Mole and Coconnas, in which her youngest son, the Duc d'Alençon (afterwards Duc d'Anjou, on the accession of Henri III.) took part, lending himself very willingly to his mother's wishes, and displaying an ambition much encouraged by his sister Marguerite, then queen of Navarre. This secret conspiracy had now reached the point to which Catherine sought to bring it. Its object was to put the young duke and his brother-in-law, the king of Navarre, at the head of the Calvinists, to seize the person of Charles IX., and imprison that king without an heir, — leaving the throne to the Duc d'Alençon, whose intention it was to establish Calvinism as the religion of France. Calvin, as we have already said, had obtained, a few days before his death, the reward he had so deeply coveted, — the Reformation was now called Calvinism in his honor.

If Le Laboureur and other sensible writers had not already proved that La Mole and Coconnas, — arrested fifty nights after the day on which our present history begins, and beheaded the following April, — even, we say, if it had not been made historically clear that these men were the victims of the queen-mother's policy, the part which Cosmo Ruggiero took in this affair would go far to show that she secretly directed their enterprise. Ruggiero, against whom the king had suspi-

cions, and for whom he cherished a hatred the motives of which we are about to explain, was included in the prosecution. He admitted having given to La Mole a wax figure representing the king, which was pierced through the heart by two needles. This method of casting spells constituted a crime, which, in those days, was punished by death. It presents one of the most startling and infernal images of hatred that humanity could invent; it pictures admirably the magnetic and terrible working in the occult world of a constant malevolent desire surrounding the person doomed to death; the effects of which on the person are exhibited by the figure of wax. The law in those days thought, and thought justly, that a desire to which an actual form was given should be regarded as a crime of *lèse majesté*. Charles IX. demanded the death of Ruggiero; Catherine, more powerful than her son, obtained from the Parliament, through the young counsellor, Lecamus, a commutation of the sentence, and Cosmo was sent to the galleys. The following year, on the death of the king, he was pardoned by a decree of Henri III., who restored his pension, and received him at court.

But, to return now to the moment of which we are writing, Catherine had, by this time, struck so many blows on the heart of her son that he was eagerly desirous of casting off her yoke. During the absence of Marie Touchet, Charles IX., deprived of his usual occupation, had taken to observing everything about him. He cleverly set traps for the persons in whom he trusted most, in order to test their fidelity. He spied on his mother's actions, concealing from her all knowledge of his own, employing for this deception the evil qualities

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she had fostered in him. Consumed by a desire to blot out the horror excited in France by the Saint-Bartholomew, he busied himself actively in public affairs; he presided at the Council, and tried to seize the reins of government by well-laid schemes. Though the queen-mother endeavored to check these attempts of her son by employing all the means of influence over his mind which her maternal authority and a long habit of domineering gave her, his rush into distrust was so vehement that he went too far at the first bound ever to return from it. The day on which his mother's speech to the king of Poland was reported to him, Charles IX., conscious of his failing health, conceived the most horrible suspicions, and when such thoughts take possession of the mind of a son and a king nothing can remove them. In fact, on his deathbed, at the moment when he confided his wife and daughter to Henri IV., he began to put the latter on his guard against Catherine, so that she cried out passionately, endeavoring to silence him, "Do not say that, monsieur!"

Though Charles IX. never ceased to show her the outward respect of which she was so tenacious that she would never call the kings her sons anything but "Monsieur," the queen-mother had detected in her son's manner during the last few months an ill-disguised purpose of vengeance. But clever indeed must be the man who counted on taking Catherine unawares. She held ready in her hand at this moment the conspiracy of the Duke d'Alençon and La Mole, in order to counteract, by another fraternal struggle, the efforts Charles IX. was making toward emancipation. But, before employing this means, she wanted to re-

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move his distrust of her, which would render impossible their future reconciliation; for was he likely to restore power to the hands of a mother whom he thought capable of poisoning him? She felt herself at this moment in such serious danger that she had sent for Strozzi, her relation and a soldier noted for his promptitude of action. She took counsel in secret with Birago and the two Gondis, and never did she so frequently consult her oracle, Cosmo Ruggiero, as at the present crisis.

Though the habit of dissimulation, together with advancing age, had given the queen-mother that well-known abbess face, with its haughty and macerated mask, expressionless yet full of depth, inscrutable yet vigilant, remarked by all who have studied her portrait, the courtiers now observed some clouds on her icy countenance. No sovereign was ever so imposing as this woman from the day when she succeeded in restraining the Guises after the death of François II. Her black velvet cap, made with a point upon the forehead (for she never relinquished her widow's mourning) seemed a species of feminine cowl around the cold, imperious face, to which, however, she knew how to give, at the right moment, a seductive Italian charm. Catherine de' Medici was so well made that she was accused of inventing side-saddles to show the shape of her legs, which were absolutely perfect. Women followed her example in this respect throughout Europe, which even then took its fashions from France. Those who desire to bring this grand figure before their minds will find that the scene now taking place in the brown hall of the Louvre presents it in a striking aspect.

of the noblest qualities of the heart. The wrinkles of his brow, the youth of which was killed by dreadful cares, inspired the strongest interest; remorse, caused by the uselessness of the Saint Bartholomew, accounted for some, but there were two others on that face which would have been eloquent indeed to any student whose premature genius had led him to divine the principles of modern physiology. These wrinkles made a deeply indented furrow going from each cheek-bone to each corner of the mouth, revealing the inward efforts of an organization wearied by the toil of thought and the violent excitements of the body. Charles IX. was worn-out. If policy did not stifle remorse in the breasts of those who sit beneath the purple, the queen-mother, looking at her own work, would surely have felt it. Had Catherine foreseen the effect of her intrigues upon her son, would she have recoiled from them? What a fearful spectacle was this! A king born vigorous, and now so feeble; a mind powerfully tempered, shaken by distrust; a man clothed with authority, conscious of no support; a firm mind brought to the pass of having lost all confidence in itself! His warlike valor had changed by degrees to ferocity; his discretion to deceit; the refined and delicate love of a Valois was now a mere quenchless desire for pleasure. This perverted and misjudged great man, with all the many facets of a noble soul worn-out, — a king without power, a generous heart without a friend, dragged hither and thither by a thousand conflicting intrigues, — presented the melancholy spectacle of a youth, only twenty-four years old, disillusioned of life, distrusting everybody and everything, now resolving to risk all, even his life, on a

last effort. For some time past he had fully understood his royal mission, his power, his resources, and the obstacles which his mother opposed to the pacification of the kingdom; but alas! this light now burned in a shattered lantern.

Two men, whom Charles IX. loved sufficiently to protect under circumstances of great danger, — Jean Chapelain, his physician, whom he saved from the Saint Bartholomew, and Ambroise Paré, with whom he went to dine when Paré's enemies were accusing him of intending to poison the king, — had arrived this evening in haste from the provinces, recalled by the queen-mother. Both were watching their master anxiously. A few courtiers spoke to them in a low voice; but the men of science made guarded answers, carefully concealing the fatal verdict which was in their minds. Every now and then the king would raise his heavy eyelids and give his mother a furtive look which he tried to conceal from those about him. Suddenly he sprang up and stood before the fireplace.

“Monsieur de Chiverni,” he said abruptly, “why do you keep the title of chancellor of Anjou and Poland? Are you in our service, or in that of our brother?”

“I am all yours, sire,” replied Chiverni, bowing low.

“Then come to me to-morrow; I intend to send you to Spain. Very strange things are happening at the court of Madrid, gentlemen.”

The king looked at his wife and flung himself back into his chair.

“Strange things are happening everywhere,” said the Maréchal de Tavannes, one of the friends of the king's youth, in a low voice.

The king rose again and led this companion of his youthful pleasures apart into the embrasure of the window at the corner of the room, saying, when they were out of hearing : —

“ I want you. Remain here when the others go. I shall know to-night whether you are for me or against me. Don't look astonished. I am about to burst my bonds. My mother is the cause of all the evil about me. Three months hence I shall be king indeed, or dead. Silence, if you value your life ! You will have my secret, you and Solern and Villeroy only. If it is betrayed, it will be by one of you three. Don't keep near me ; go and pay your court to my mother. Tell her I am dying, and that you don't regret it, for I am only a poor creature.”

The king was leaning on the shoulder of his old favorite, and pretending to tell him of his ailments, in order to mislead the inquisitive eyes about him ; then, not wishing to make his aversion too visible, he went up to his wife and mother and talked with them, calling Birago to their side.

Just then Pinard, one of the secretaries of State, glided like an eel through the door and along the wall until he reached the queen-mother, in whose ear he said a few words, to which she replied by an affirmative sign. The king did not ask his mother the meaning of this conference, but he returned to his seat and kept silence, darting terrible looks of anger and suspicion all about him.

This little circumstance seemed of enormous consequence in the eyes of the courtiers ; and, in truth, so marked an exercise of power by the queen-mother,

without reference to the king, was like a drop of water overflowing the cup. Queen Elizabeth and the Comtesse de Fiesque now retired, but the king paid no attention to their movements, though the queen-mother rose and attended her daughter-in-law to the door; after which the courtiers, understanding that their presence was unwelcome, took their leave. By ten o'clock no one remained in the hall but a few intimates, — the two Gondis, Tavannes, Solern, Birago, the king, and the queen-mother.

The king sat plunged in the blackest melancholy. The silence was oppressive. Catherine seemed embarrassed. She wished to leave the room, and waited for the king to escort her to the door; but he still continued obstinately lost in thought. At last she rose to bid him good-night, and Charles IX. was forced to do likewise. As she took his arm and made a few steps toward the door, she bent to his ear and whispered: —

“Monsieur, I have important things to say to you.”

Passing a mirror on her way, she glanced into it and made a sign with her eyes to the two Gondis, which escaped the king's notice, for he was at the moment exchanging looks of intelligence with the Comte de Solern and Villeroy. Tavannes was thoughtful.

“Sire,” said the latter, coming out of his reverie, “I think you are royally ennuyéd; don't you ever amuse yourself now? *Vive Dieu!* have you forgotten the times when we used to vagabondize about the streets at night?”

“Ah! those were the good old times!” said the king, with a sigh.

“Why not bring them back?” said Birago, glancing significantly at the Gondis as he took his leave.

"Yes, I always think of those days with pleasure," said Albert de Gondi, Duc de Retz.

"I'd like to see you on the roofs once more, monsieur le duc," remarked Tavannes. "Damned Italian cat! I wish he might break his neck!" he added in a whisper to the king.

"I don't know which of us two could climb the quickest in these days," replied de Gondi; "but one thing I do know, that neither of us fears to die."

"Well, sire, will you start upon a frolic in the streets to-night, as you did in the days of your youth?" said the other Gondi, master of the Wardrobe.

The days of his youth! so at twenty-four years of age the wretched king seemed no longer young to any one, not even to his flatterers!

Tavannes and his master now reminded each other, like two school-boys, of certain pranks they had played in Paris, and the evening's amusement was soon arranged. The two Italians, challenged to climb roofs, and jump from one to another across alleys and streets, wagered that they would follow the king wherever he went. They and Tavannes went off to change their clothes. The Comte de Solern, left alone with the king, looked at him in amazement. Though the worthy German, filled with compassion for the hapless position of the king of France, was honor and fidelity itself, he was certainly not quick of perception. Charles IX., surrounded by hostile persons, unable to trust any one, not even his wife (who had been guilty of some indiscretions, unaware as she was that his mother and his servants were his enemies), had been fortunate enough to find in Monsieur de Solern a faith-

ful friend in whom he could place entire confidence. Tavannes and Villeroy were trusted with only a part of the king's secrets. The Comte de Solern alone knew the whole of the plan which he was now about to carry out. This devoted friend was also useful to his master, in possessing a body of discreet and affectionate followers, who blindly obeyed his orders. He commanded a detachment of the archers of the guards, and for the last few days he had been sifting out the men who were faithfully attached to the king, in order to make a company of tried men when the need came. The king took thought of everything.

"Why are you surprised, Solern?" he said. "You know very well I need a pretext to be out to-night. It is true, I have Madame de Belleville, but this is better; for who knows whether my mother does not hear of all that goes on at Marie's?"

Monsieur de Solern, who was to follow the king, asked if he might not take a few of his Germans to patrol the streets, and Charles consented. About eleven o'clock the king, who was now very gay, set forth with his three courtiers, — namely, Tavannes and the two Gondis.

"I'll go and take my little Marie by surprise," said Charles IX. to Tavannes, "as we pass through the rue de l'Autruche." That street being on the way to the rue Saint-Honoré, it would have been strange indeed for the king to pass the house of his love without stopping.

Looking out for a chance of mischief, — a belated burgher to frighten, or a watchman to thrash — the king went along with his nose in the air, watching all the lighted windows to see what was happening,

and striving to hear the conversations. But alas! he found his good city of Paris in a state of deplorable tranquillity. Suddenly, as he passed the house of a famous perfumer named René, who supplied the court, the king, noticing a strong light from a window in the roof, was seized by one of those apparently hasty inspirations which, to some minds, suggest a previous intention.

This perfumer was strongly suspected of curing rich uncles who thought themselves ill. The court laid at his door the famous "Elixir of Inheritance," and even accused him of poisoning Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henri of Navarre, who was buried (in spite of Charles IX.'s positive order) without her head being opened. For the last two months the king had sought some way of sending a spy into René's laboratory, where, as he was well aware, Cosmo Ruggiero spent much time. The king intended, if anything suspicious were discovered, to proceed in the matter alone, without the assistance of police or law, with whom, as he well knew, his mother would counteract him by means of either corruption or fear.

It is certain that during the sixteenth century, and the years that preceded and followed it, poisoning was brought to a perfection unknown to modern chemistry, as history itself will prove. Italy, the cradle of modern science, was, at this period, the inventor and mistress of these secrets, many of which are now lost. Hence the reputation for that crime which weighed for the two following centuries on Italy. Romance-writers have so greatly abused it that wherever they have introduced Italians into their tales they

have almost always made them play the part of assassins and poisoners.¹ If Italy then had the traffic in subtle poisons which some historians attribute to her, we should remember her supremacy in the art of toxicology, as we do her pre-eminence in all other human knowledge and art in which she took the lead in Europe. The crimes of that period were not her crimes specially. She served the passions of the age, just as she built magnificent edifices, commanded armies, painted noble frescos, sang romances, loved queens, delighted kings, devised ballets and fêtes, and ruled all policies. The horrible art of poisoning reached to such a pitch in Florence that a woman, dividing a peach with a duke, using a golden fruit-knife with one side of its blade poisoned, ate one half of the peach herself and killed the duke with the other half. A pair of perfumed gloves were known to have infiltrated mortal illness through the pores of the skin. Poison was instilled into bunches of natural roses, and the fragrance, when inhaled, gave death. Don John of Austria was poisoned, it was said, by a pair of boots.

Charles IX. had good reason to be curious in the matter; we know already the dark suspicions and beliefs which now prompted him to surprise the perfumer René at his work.

The old fountain at the corner of the rue de l'Arbre-See, which has since been rebuilt, offered every facility for the royal vagabonds to climb upon the roof of a house not far from that of René, which the king wished to visit. Charles, followed by his companions, began to ramble over the roofs, to the great terror of the burgh-

¹ Written sixty-six years ago. — *Tr.*

ers awakened by the tramp of these false thieves, who called to them in saucy language, listened to their talk, and even pretended to force an entrance. When the Italians saw the king and Tavannes threading their way among the roofs of the house next to that of René, Albert de Gondi sat down, declaring that he was tired, and his brother followed his example.

"So much the better," thought the king, glad to leave his spies behind him.

Tavannes began to laugh at the two Florentines, left sitting alone in the midst of deep silence, in a place where they had nought but the skies above them, and the cats for auditors. But the brothers made use of their position to exchange thoughts they would not dare to utter on any other spot in the world,—thoughts inspired by the events of the evening.

"Albert," said the Grand-master to the maréchal, "the king will get the better of the queen-mother; we are doing a foolish thing for our own interests to stay by those of Catherine. If we go over to the king now, when he is searching everywhere for support against her and for able men to serve him, we shall not be driven away like wild beasts when the queen-mother is banished, imprisoned, or killed."

"You would n't get far with such ideas, Charles," replied the maréchal, gravely. "You'd follow the king into the grave, and he won't live long; he is ruined by excesses. Cosmo Ruggiero predicts his death within a year."

"The dying boar has often killed the huntsman," said Charles de Gondi. "This conspiracy of the Duc d'Alençon, the king of Navarre, and the Prince de

Condé, with whom La Mole and Coconnas are negotiating, is more dangerous than useful. In the first place, the king of Navarre, whom the queen-mother hoped to catch in the very act, distrusts her, and declines to run his head into the noose. He means to profit by the conspiracy without taking any of its risks. Besides, the notion now is to put the crown on the head of the Duc d'Alençon, who has turned Calvinist."

"*Budelone!* but don't you see that this conspiracy enables the queen-mother to find out what the Huguenots can do with the Duc d'Alençon, and what the king can do with the Huguenots? — for the king is even now negotiating with them; but he'll be finely pilloried to-morrow, when Catherine reveals to him the counter-conspiracy which will neutralize all his projects."

"Ah!" exclaimed Charles de Gondi, "by dint of profiting by our advice she's cleverer and stronger than we! Well, that's all right."

"All right for the Duc d'Anjou, who prefers to be king of France rather than king of Poland; I am going now to explain the matter to him."

"When do you start, Albert?"

"To-morrow. I am ordered to accompany the king of Poland; and I expect to join him in Venice, where the patricians have taken upon themselves to amuse and delay him."

"You are prudence itself!"

"*Che bestia!* I swear to you there is not the slightest danger for either of us in remaining at court. If there were, do you think I would go away? I should stay by the side of our kind mistress."

"Kind!" exclaimed the Grand-master; "she is a

woman to drop all her instruments the moment she finds them heavy."

"*O coglione!* you pretend to be a soldier, and you fear death! Every business has its duties, and we have ours in making our fortune. By attaching ourselves to kings, the source of all temporal power which protects, elevates, and enriches families, we are forced to give them as devoted a love as that which burns in the heart of martyrs toward heaven. We must suffer in their cause; when they sacrifice us to the interests of their throne we may perish, for we die as much for ourselves as for them, but our name and our families perish not. *Ecco!*"

"You are right as to yourself, Albert; for they have given you the ancient title and duchy of de Retz."

"Now listen to me," replied his brother. "The queen hopes much from the cleverness of the Ruggieri; she expects them to bring the king once more under her control. When Charles refused to use René's perfumes any longer the wary woman knew at once on whom his suspicions really rested. But who can tell the schemes that are in his mind? Perhaps he is only hesitating as to what fate he shall give his mother; he hates her, you know. He said a few words about it to his wife; she repeated them to Madame de Fiesque, and Madame de Fiesque told the queen-mother. Since then the king has kept away from his wife."

"The time has come," said Charles de Gondî.

"To do what?" asked the maréchal.

"To lay hold of the king's mind," replied the Grand-master, who, if he was not so much in the queen's confidence as his brother, was by no means less clear-sighted.

"Charles, I have opened a great career to you," said his brother gravely. "If you wish to be a duke also, be, as I am, the accomplice and cat's-paw of our mistress; she is the strongest here, and she will continue in power. Madame de Sauves is on her side, and the king of Navarre and the Duc d'Alençon are still for Madame de Sauves. Catherine holds the pair in a leash under Charles IX., and she will hold them in future under Henri III. God grant that Henri may not prove ungrateful!"

"How so?"

"His mother is doing too much for him."

"Hush! what noise is that I hear in the rue Saint-Honoré?" cried the Grand-master. "Listen! there is some one at René's door! Don't you hear the footsteps of many men. Can they have arrested the Ruggieri?"

"Ah, *diavolo!* this is prudence indeed. The king has not shown his usual impetuosity. But where will they imprison them? Let us get down into the street and see."

The two brothers reached the corner of the rue de l'Autruche just as the king was entering the house of his mistress, Marie Touchet. By the light of the torches which the concierge carried, they distinguished Tavannes and the two Ruggieri.

"Hey, Tavannes!" cried the grand-master, running after the king's companion, who had turned and was making his way back to the Louvre, "What happened to you?"

"We fell into a nest of sorcerers and arrested two, compatriots of yours, who may perhaps be able to explain to the minds of French gentlemen how you, who

are not Frenchmen, have managed to lay hands on two of the chief offices of the Crown," replied Tavannes, half jesting, half in earnest.

"But the king?" inquired the Grand-master, who cared little for Tavannes's enmity.

"He stays with his mistress."

"We reached our present distinction through an absolute devotion to our masters, — a noble course, my dear Tavannes, which I see that you also have adopted," replied Albert de Gondi.

The three courtiers walked on in silence. At the moment when they parted, on meeting their servants who then escorted them, two men glided swiftly along the walls of the rue de l'Autruche. These men were the king and the Comte de Solern, who soon reached the banks of the Seine, at a point where a boat and two rowers, carefully selected by de Solern, awaited them. In a very few moments they reached the other shore.

"My mother has not gone to bed," cried the king. "She will see us; we chose a bad place for the interview."

"She will think it a duel," replied Solern; "and she cannot possibly distinguish who we are at this distance."

"Well, let her see me!" exclaimed Charles IX. "I am resolved now!"

The king and his confidant sprang ashore and walked quickly in the direction of the Pré-aux-Clercs. When they reached it the Comte de Solern, preceding the king, met a man who was evidently on the watch, and with whom he exchanged a few words; the man then

retired to a distance. Presently two other men, who seemed to be princes by the marks of respect which the first man paid to them, left the place where they were evidently hiding behind the broken fence of a field, and approached the king, to whom they bent the knee. But Charles IX. raised them before they touched the ground, saying : —

“ No ceremony, we are all gentlemen here.”

A venerable old man, who might have been taken for the Chancelier de l'Hôpital, had the latter not died in the preceding year, now joined the three gentlemen, all four walking rapidly so as to reach a spot where their conference could not be overheard by their attendants. The Comte de Solern followed at a slight distance to keep watch over the king. That faithful servant was filled with a distrust not shared by Charles IX., a man to whom life was now a burden. He was the only person on the king's side who witnessed this mysterious conference, which presently became animated.

“ Sire,” said one of the new-comers, “ the Connétable de Montmorency, the closest friend of the king your father, agreed with the Maréchal de Saint-André in declaring that Madame Catherine ought to be sewn up in a sack and flung into the river. If that had been done then, many worthy persons would be still alive.”

“ I have enough executions on my conscience, monsieur,” replied the king.

“ But, sire,” said the youngest of the four personages, “ if you merely banish her, from the depths of her exile Queen Catherine will continue to stir up strife, and to find auxiliaries. We have everything to fear from the Guises, who, for the last nine years, have

schemed for a vast Catholic alliance, in the secret of which your Majesty is not included; and it threatens your throne. This alliance was invented by Spain, which will never renounce its project of destroying the boundary of the Pyrenees. Sire, Calvinism will save France by setting up a moral barrier between her and a nation which covets the empire of the world. If the queen-mother is exiled, she will turn for help to Spain and to the Guises."

"Gentlemen," said the king, "know this, if by your help peace without distrust is once established, I will take upon myself the duty of making all subjects tremble. *Tête-Dieu!* it is time indeed for royalty to assert itself. My mother is right in that, at any rate. You ought to know that it is to your interest as well as mine, for your hands, your fortunes depend upon our throne. If religion is overthrown, the hands you allow to do it will be laid next upon the throne and then upon you. I no longer care to fight ideas with weapons that cannot touch them. Let us see now if Protestantism will make progress when left to itself; above all, I would like to see with whom and what the spirit of that faction will wrestle. The admiral, God rest his soul! was not my enemy; he swore to me to restrain the revolt within spiritual limits, and to leave the ruling of the kingdom to the monarch, his master, with submissive subjects. Gentlemen, if the matter be still within your power, set that example now; help your sovereign to put down a spirit of rebellion which takes tranquillity from each and all of us. War is depriving us of revenue; it is ruining this kingdom. I am weary of these constant troubles; so weary, that if it is absolutely

necessary I will sacrifice my mother. Nay, I will go farther ; I will keep an equal number of Protestants and Catholics about me, and I will hold the axe of Louis XI. above their heads to force them to be on good terms. If the Messieurs de Guise plot a Holy Alliance to attack our crown, the executioner shall begin with their heads. I see the miseries of my people, and I will make short work of the great lords who attempt to bring more trouble into the kingdom. I care little for consciences, — let them hold what opinions they like ; what I want in future is submissive subjects, who will work, according to my will, for the prosperity of the State. Gentlemen, I give you ten days to negotiate with your friends, to break off your plots, and to return to me who will be your father. If you refuse you will see great changes. I shall use the mass of the people, who will rise at my voice against the lords. I will make myself a king who pacificates his kingdom by striking down those who are more powerful even than you, and who dare defy him. If the troops fail me, I have my brother of Spain, on whom I shall call to defend our menaced thrones, and if I lack a minister to carry out my will, he can lend me the Duke of Alba.”

“ But in that case, sire, we should have Germans to oppose to your Spaniards,” said one of his hearers.

“ Cousin,” replied Charles IX., coldly, “ my wife’s name is Elizabeth of Austria ; support might fail you on the German side. But, for Heaven’s sake, let us fight, if fight we must, alone, without the help of foreigners. You are the object of my mother’s hatred, and you stand near enough to me to be my second in the duel I am about to fight with her ; well then, listen

to what I now say. You seem to me so worthy of confidence that I offer you the post of *connétable*; you will not betray me like the other."

The prince to whom Charles IX. had addressed himself, struck his hand into that of the king, exclaiming:

"*Ventre-saint-gris!* brother; this is enough to make me forget many wrongs. But, sire, the head cannot march without the tail, and ours is a long tail to drag. Give me more than ten days; we want at least a month to make our friends hear reason. At the end of that time we shall be masters."

"A month, so be it! My only negotiator will be Villeroy; trust no one else, no matter what is said to you."

"One month," echoed the other seigneurs, "that is sufficient."

"Gentlemen, we are five," said the king, — "five men of honor. If any betrayal takes place, we shall know on whom to avenge it."

The three strangers kissed the hand of Charles IX. and took leave of him with every mark of the utmost respect. As the king recrossed the Seine, four o'clock was ringing from the clock-tower of the Louvre. Lights were in the queen-mother's room; she had not yet gone to bed.

"My mother is still on the watch," said Charles to the Comte de Solern.

"She has her forge as you have yours," remarked the German.

"Dear count, what do you think of a king who is reduced to become a conspirator?" said Charles IX., bitterly, after a pause.

“I think, sire, that if you would allow me to fling that woman into the river, as your young cousin said, France would soon be at peace.”

“What! a parricide in addition to the Saint-Bartholomew, count?” cried the king. “No, no! I will exile her. Once fallen, my mother will no longer have either servants or partisans.”

“Well, then, sire,” replied the Comte de Solern, “give me the order to arrest her at once and take her out of the kingdom; for to-morrow she will have forced you to change your mind.”

“Come to my forge,” said the king, “no one can overhear us there; besides, I don’t want my mother to suspect the capture of the Ruggieri. If she knows I am in my work-shop she’ll suppose nothing, and we can consult about the proper measures for her arrest.”

As the king entered a lower room of the palace, which he used for a workshop, he called his companion’s attention to the forge and his implements with a laugh.

“I don’t believe,” he said, “among all the kings that France will ever have, there’ll be another to take pleasure in such work as that. But when I am really king, I’ll forge no swords; they shall all go back into their scabbards.”

“Sire,” said the Comte de Solern, “the fatigues of tennis and hunting, your toil at this forge, and — if I may say it — love, are chariots which the devil is offering you to get the faster to Saint-Denis.”

“Solern,” said the king, in a piteous tone, “if you knew the fire they have put into my soul and body! nothing can quench it. Are you sure of the men who are guarding the Ruggieri?”

“As sure as of myself.”

“Very good; then, during this coming day I shall take my own course. Think of the proper means of making the arrest, and I will give you my final orders by five o'clock at Madame de Belleville's.”

As the first rays of dawn were struggling with the lights of the workshop, Charles IX., left alone by the departure of the Comte de Solern, heard the door of the apartment turn on its hinges, and saw his mother standing within it in the dim light like a phantom. Though very nervous and impressible, the king did not quiver, albeit, under the circumstances in which he then stood, this apparition had a certain air of mystery and horror.

“Monsieur,” she said, “you are killing yourself.”

“I am fulfilling my horoscope,” he replied with a bitter smile. “But you, madame, you appear to be as early as I.”

“We have both been up all night, monsieur; but with very different intentions. While you have been conferring with your worst enemies in the open fields, concealing your acts from your mother, assisted by Tavannes and the Gondis, with whom you have been scouring the town, I have been reading despatches which contained the proofs of a terrible conspiracy in which your brother, the Duc d'Alençon, your brother-in-law, the king of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and half the nobles of your kingdom are taking part. Their purpose is nothing less than to take the crown from your head and seize your person. Those gentlemen have already fifty thousand good troops behind them.”

“Bah!” exclaimed the king, incredulously.

“Your brother has turned Huguenot,” she continued.

“ My brother ! gone over to the Huguenots ! ” cried Charles, brandishing the piece of iron which he held in his hand.

“ Yes ; the Duc d’Alençon, Huguenot at heart, will soon be one before the eyes of the world. Your sister, the queen of Navarre, has almost ceased to love you ; she cares more for the Duc d’Alençon ; she cares for Bussy ; and she loves that little La Mole.”

“ What a heart ! ” exclaimed the king.

“ That little La Mole,” went on the queen, “ wishes to make himself a great man by giving France a king of his own stripe. He is promised, they say, the place of connétable.”

“ Curse that Margot ! ” cried the king. “ This is what comes of her marriage with a heretic.”

“ Heretic or not is of no consequence ; the trouble is that, in spite of my advice, you have brought the head of the younger branch too near the throne by that marriage, and Henri’s purpose now is to embroil you with the rest and make you kill one another. The house of Bourbon is the enemy of the house of Valois ; remember that, monsieur. All younger branches should be kept in a state of poverty, for they are born conspirators. It is sheer folly to give them arms when they have none, or to leave them in possession of arms when they seize them. Let every younger son be made incapable of doing harm ; that is the law of Crowns ; the Sultans of Asia follow it. The proofs of this conspiracy are in my room upstairs, where I asked you to follow me last evening, when you bade me good-night ; but instead of doing so, it seems you had other plans. I therefore waited for you. If we do not take the proper measures

immediately you will meet the fate of Charles the Simple within a month."

"A month!" exclaimed the king, thunderstruck at the coincidence of that period with the delay asked for by the princes themselves. "'In a month we shall be masters,'" he added to himself, quoting their words. "Madame," he said aloud, "what are your proofs?"

"They are unanswerable, monsieur; they come from my daughter Marguerite. Alarmed herself at the possibilities of such a combination, her love for the throne of the Valois has proved stronger, this time, than all her other loves. She asks, as the price of her revelations that nothing shall be done to La Mole; but the scoundrel seems to me a dangerous villain whom we had better be rid of, as well as the Comte de Coconnas, your brother d'Alençon's right hand. As for the Prince de Condé, he consents to everything, provided I am thrown into the sea; perhaps that is the wedding present he gives me in return for the pretty wife I gave him! All this is a serious matter, monsieur. You talk of horoscopes! I know of a prediction which gives the throne of the Valois to the Bourbons, and if we do not take care it will be fulfilled. Do not be angry with your sister; she has behaved well in this affair. My son," continued the queen, after a pause, giving a tone of tenderness to her words, "evil persons on the side of the Guises are trying to sow dissensions between you and me; and yet we are the only ones in the kingdom whose interests are absolutely identical. You blame me, I know, for the Saint-Bartholomew; you accuse me of having forced you into it. Catholicism,

monsieur, must be the bond between France, Spain, and Italy, three countries which can, by skilful management, secretly planned, be united in course of time, under the house of Valois. Do not deprive yourself of such chances by loosing the cord which binds the three kingdoms in the bonds of a common faith. Why should not the Valois and the Medici carry out for their own glory the scheme of Charles the Fifth, whose head failed him? Let us fling off that race of Jeanne la Folle. The Medici, masters of Florence and of Rome, will force Italy to support your interests; they will guarantee you advantages by treaties of commerce and alliance which shall recognize your fiefs in Piedmont, the Milanais, and Naples, where you have rights. These, monsieur, are the reasons of the war to the death which we make against the Huguenots. Why do you force me to repeat these things? Charlemagne was wrong in advancing toward the north. France is a body whose heart is on the Gulf of Lyons and its two arms over Spain and Italy. Therefore, she must rule the Mediterranean, that basket into which are poured all the riches of the Orient, now turned to the profit of those seigneurs of Venice, in the very teeth of Philip II. If the friendship of the Medici and your rights justify you in hoping for Italy, force, alliances, or a possible inheritance may give you Spain. Warn the house of Austria as to this, — that ambitious house to which the Guelphs sold Italy, and which is even now hankering after Spain. Though your wife is of that house, humble it! Clasp it so closely that you will smother it! *There* are the enemies of your kingdom; thence comes help to the Reformers. Do not listen to

those who find their profit in causing us to disagree, and who torment your life by making you believe I am your secret enemy. Have I prevented you from having heirs? Why has your mistress given you a son, and your wife a daughter? Why have you not to-day three legitimate heirs to root out the hopes of these seditious persons? Is it I, monsieur, who am responsible for such failures? If you had an heir, would the Duc d'Alençon be now conspiring?"

As she ended these words, Catherine fixed upon her son the magnetic glance of a bird of prey upon its victim. The daughter of the Medici became magnificent; her real self shone upon her face, which, like that of a gambler over the green table, glittered with vast cupidities. Charles IX. saw no longer the mother of one man, but (as was said of her) the mother of armies and of empires, — *mater castrorum*. Catherine had now spread wide the wings of her genius, and boldly flown to the heights of the Medici and Valois policy, tracing once more the mighty plans which terrified in earlier days her husband Henri II., and which, transmitted by the genius of the Medici to Richelieu, remain in writing among the papers of the house of Bourbon. But Charles IX., hearing the unusual persuasions his mother was using, thought that there must be some necessity for them, and he began to ask himself what could be her motive. He dropped his eyes; he hesitated; his distrust was not lessened by her studied phrases. Catherine was amazed at the depths of suspicion she now beheld in her son's heart.

"Well, monsieur," she said, "do you not understand me? What are we, you and I, in comparison

with the eternity of royal crowns? Do you suppose me to have other designs than those that ought to actuate all royal persons who inhabit the sphere where empires are ruled?"

"Madame, I will follow you to your cabinet; we must act —"

"Act!" cried Catherine; "let our enemies alone; let *them* act; take them red-handed, and law and justice will deliver you from their assaults. For God's sake, monsieur, show them good-will."

The queen withdrew; the king remained alone for a few moments, for he was utterly overwhelmed.

"On which side is the trap?" thought he. "Which of the two — she or they — deceive me? What is my best policy? *Deus, discerne causam meam!*" he muttered with tears in his eyes. "Life is a burden to me! I prefer death, natural or violent, to these perpetual torments!" he cried presently, bringing down his hammer upon the anvil with such force that the vaults of the palace trembled.

"My God!" he said, as he went outside and looked up at the sky, "thou for whose holy religion I struggle, give me the light of thy countenance that I may penetrate the secrets of my mother's heart while I question the Ruggieri."

III.

MARIE TOUCHET.

THE little house of Madame de Belleville, where Charles IX. had deposited his prisoners, was the last but one in the rue de l'Autruche on the side of the rue Saint-Honoré. The street gate, flanked by two little brick pavilions, seemed very simple in those days, when gates and their accessories were so elaborately treated. It had two pilasters of stone cut in facets, and the coping represented a reclining woman holding a cornucopia. The gate itself, closed by enormous locks, had a wicket through which to examine those who asked admittance. In each pavilion lived a porter; for the king's extremely capricious pleasure required a porter by day and by night. The house had a little courtyard, paved like those of Venice. At this period, before carriages were invented, ladies went about on horseback, or in litters, so that courtyards could be made magnificent without fear of injury from horses or carriages. This fact is always to be remembered as an explanation of the narrowness of streets, the small size of courtyards, and certain other details of the private dwellings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The house, of one story only above the ground-floor, was capped by a sculptured frieze, above which rose a

roof with four sides, the peak being flattened to form a platform. Dormer windows were cut in this roof, with casings and pediments which the chisel of some great artist had covered with arabesques and dentils; each of the three windows on the main floor were equally beautiful in stone embroidery, which the brick of the walls showed off to great advantage. On the ground-floor, a double portico, very delicately decorated, led to the entrance door, which was covered with bosses cut with facets in the Venetian manner, — a style of decoration which was further carried on round the windows placed to right and left of the door.

A garden, carefully laid out in the fashion of the times and filled with choice flowers, occupied a space behind the house equal to that of the courtyard in front. A grape-vine draped its walls. In the centre of a grass plot rose a silver fir-tree. The flower-borders were separated from the grass by meandering paths which led to an arbor of clipped yews at the farther end of the little garden. The walls were covered with a mosaic of variously colored pebbles, coarse in design, it is true, but pleasing to the eye from the harmony of its tints with those of the flower-beds. The house had a carved balcony on the garden side, above the door, and also on the front toward the courtyard, and around the middle windows. On both sides of the house the ornamentation of the principal window, which projected some feet from the wall, rose to the frieze; so that it formed a little pavilion, hung there like a lantern. The casings of the other windows were inlaid on the stone with precious marbles.

In spite of the exquisite taste displayed in the little

house, there was an air of melancholy about it. It was darkened by the buildings that surrounded it and by the roofs of the hôtel d'Alençon which threw a heavy shadow over both court and garden; moreover, a deep silence reigned there. But this silence, these half-lights, this solitude, soothed a royal soul, which could there surrender itself to a single emotion, as in a cloister where men pray, or in some sheltered home wherein they love.

It is easy now to imagine the interior charm and choiceness of this haven, the sole spot in his kingdom where this dying Valois could pour out his soul, reveal his sufferings, exercise his taste for art, and give himself up to the poesy he loved, — pleasures denied him by the cares of a cruel royalty. Here, alone, were his great soul and his high intrinsic worth appreciated; here he could give himself up, for a few brief months, the last of his life, to the joys of fatherhood, — pleasures into which he flung himself with the frenzy that a sense of his coming and dreadful death impressed on all his actions.

In the afternoon of the day succeeding the night-scene we have just described, Marie Touchet was finishing her toilet in the oratory, which was the boudoir of those days. She was arranging the long curls of her beautiful black hair, blending them with the velvet of a new coif, and gazing intently into her mirror.

“It is nearly four o'clock; that interminable council must surely be over,” she thought to herself. “Jacob has returned from the Louvre; he says that everybody he saw was excited about the number of the councillors summoned and the length of the session. What can

have happened? Is it some misfortune? Good God! surely *he* knows how suspense wears out the soul! Perhaps he has gone a-hunting? If he is happy and amused, it is all right. When I see him gay, I forget all I have suffered."

She drew her hands round her slender waist as if to smooth some trifling wrinkle in her gown, turning sideways to see if its folds fell properly, and as she did so, she caught sight of the king on the couch behind her. The carpet had so muffled the sound of his steps that he had slipped in softly without being heard.

"You frightened me!" she said, with a cry of surprise, which was quickly repressed.

"Were you thinking of me?" said the king.

"When do I not think of you?" she answered, sitting down beside him.

She took off his cap and cloak, passing her hands through his hair as though she combed it with her fingers. Charles let her do as she pleased, but made no answer. Surprised at this, Marie knelt down to study the pale face of her royal master, and then saw the signs of a dreadful weariness and a more consuming melancholy than any she had yet consoled. She repressed her tears and kept silence, that she might not irritate by mistaken words the sorrow which, as yet, she did not understand. In this she did as tender women do under like circumstances. She kissed that forehead, seamed with untimely wrinkles, and those livid cheeks, trying to convey to the worn-out soul the freshness of hers, — pouring her spirit into the sweet caresses which met with no response. Presently she raised her head to the level of the king's, clasping him softly in her

arms ; then she lay still, her face hidden on that suffering breast, watching for the opportune moment to question his dejected mind.

“ My Charlot,” she said at last, “ will you not tell your poor, distressed Marie the troubles that cloud that precious brow, and whiten those beautiful red lips ? ”

“ Except Charlemagne,” he said in a hollow voice, “ all the kings of France named Charles have ended miserably.”

“ Pooh ! ” she said, “ look at Charles VIII.”

“ That poor prince ! ” exclaimed the king. “ In the flower of his age he struck his head against a low door at the château of Amboise, which he was having decorated, and died in horrible agony. It was his death which gave the crown to our family.”

“ Charles VII. reconquered his kingdom.”

“ Darling, he died ” (the king lowered his voice) “ of hunger ; for he feared being poisoned by the dauphin, who had already caused the death of his beautiful Agnes. The father feared his son ; to-day the son dreads his mother ! ”

“ Why drag up the past ? ” she said hastily, remembering the dreadful life of Charles VI.

“ Ah ! sweetest, kings have no need to go to sorcerers to discover their coming fate ; they need only turn to history. I am at this moment endeavoring to escape the fate of Charles the Simple, who was robbed of his crown, and died in prison after seven years’ captivity.”

“ Charles V. conquered the English,” she cried triumphantly.

“ No, not he, but du Guesclin. He himself, poisoned by Charles de Navarre, dragged out a wretched existence.”

"Well, Charles IV., then?"

"He married three times to obtain an heir, in spite of the masculine beauty of the children of Philippe le Bel. The first house of Valois ended with him, and the second is about to end in the same way. The queen has given me only a daughter, and I shall die without leaving her pregnant; for a long minority would be the greatest curse I could bequeath to the kingdom. Besides, if I had a son, would he live? The name of Charles is fatal; Charlemagne exhausted the luck of it. If I left a son I should tremble at the thought that he would be Charles X."

"Who is it that wants to seize your crown?"

"My brother d'Alençon conspires against it. Enemies are all about me."

"Monsieur," said Marie, with a charming little pout, "do tell me something gayer."

"Ah! my little jewel, my treasure, don't call me 'monsieur,' even in jest; you remind me of my mother, who stabs me incessantly with that title, by which she seems to snatch away my crown. She says 'my son' to the Duc d'Anjou — I mean the king of Poland."

"Sire," exclaimed Marie, clasping her hands as though she were praying, "there is a kingdom where you are worshipped. Your Majesty fills it with his glory, his power; and there the word 'monsieur,' means 'my beloved lord.'"

She unclasped her hands, and with a pretty gesture pointed to her heart. The words were so *musiqués* (to use a word of the times which depicted the melodies of love) that Charles IX. caught her round the waist with the nervous force that characterized him, and seated

her on his knee, rubbing his forehead gently against the pretty curls so coquettishly arranged. Marie thought the moment favorable ; she ventured a few kisses, which Charles allowed rather than accepted, then she said softly : —

“ If my servants were not mistaken you were out all night in the streets, as in the days when you played the pranks of a younger son.”

“ Yes,” replied the king, still lost in his own thoughts.

“ Did you fight the watchman and frighten some of the burghers? Who are the men you brought here and locked up? They must be very criminal, as you won't allow any communication with them. No girl was ever locked in as carefully, and they have not had a mouthful to eat since they came. The Germans whom Solern left to guard them won't let any one go near the room. Is it a joke that you are playing ; or is it something serious?”

“ Yes, you are right,” said the king, coming out of his reverie, “ last night I did scour the roofs with Tavannes and the Gondis. I wanted to try my old follies with the old companions ; but my legs were not what they once were ; I did not dare leap the streets ; though we did jump two alleys from one roof to the next. At the second, however, Tavannes and I, holding on to a chimney, agreed that we could n't do it again. If either of us had been alone we could n't have done it then.”

“ I'll wager that you sprang first.” The king smiled “ I know why you risk your life in that way.”

“ And why, you little witch?”

“ You are tired of life.”

"Ah, sorceress! But I am being hunted down by sorcery," said the king, resuming his anxious look.

"My sorcery is love," she replied smiling. "Since the happy day when you first loved me, have I not always divined your thoughts? And — if you will let me speak the truth — the thoughts which torture you to-day are not worthy of a king."

"Am I a king?" he said bitterly.

"Cannot you be one? What did Charles VII. do? He listened to his mistress, monseigneur, and he reconquered his kingdom, invaded by the English as yours now is by the enemies of our religion. Your last *coup d'État* showed you the course you have to follow. Exterminate heresy."

"You blamed the Saint-Bartholomew," said Charles, "and now you —"

"That is over," she said; "besides, I agree with Madame Catherine that it was better to do it yourselves than let the Guises do it."

"Charles VII. had only men to fight; I am face to face with ideas," resumed the king. "We can kill men, but we can't kill words! The Emperor Charles V. gave up the attempt; his son Philip has spent his strength upon it; we shall all perish, we kings, in that struggle. On whom can I rely? To right, among the Catholics, I find the Guises, who are my enemies; to left, the Calvinists, who will never forgive me the death of my poor old Coligny, nor that bloody day in August; besides, they want to suppress the throne; and in front of me what have I? — my mother!"

"Arrest her; reign alone," said Marie in a low voice, whispering in his ear.

"I meant to do so yesterday; to-day I no longer intend it. You speak of it rather coolly."

"Between the daughter of an apothecary and that of a doctor there is no great difference," replied Marie Touchet, always ready to laugh at the false origin attributed to her.

The king frowned.

"Marie, don't take such liberties. Catherine de' Medici is my mother, and you ought to tremble lest —"

"What is it you fear?"

"Poison!" cried the king, beside himself.

"Poor child!" cried Marie, restraining her tears; for the sight of such strength united with such weakness touched her deeply. "Ah!" she continued, "you make me hate Madame Catherine, who has been so good to me; her kindness now seems perfidy. Why is she so kind to me, and so bad to you? During my stay in Dauphiné I heard many things about the beginning of your reign which you concealed from me; it seems to me that the queen, your mother, is the real cause of all your troubles."

"In what way?" cried the king, deeply interested.

"Women whose souls and whose intentions are pure use virtue wherewith to rule the men they love; but women who do not seek good rule men through their evil instincts. Now, the queen made vices out of certain of your noblest qualities, and she taught you to believe that your worst inclinations were virtues. Was that the part of a mother? Be a tyrant like Louis XI.; inspire terror; imitate Philip II.; banish the Italians; drive out the Guises; confiscate the lands of the Calvinists. Out of this solitude you will rise a king; you will save

the throne. The moment is propitious ; your brother is in Poland."

" We are two children at statecraft," said Charles, bitterly ; " we know nothing except how to love. Alas ! my treasure, yesterday I, too, thought all these things ; I dreamed of accomplishing great deeds — bah ! my mother blew down my house of cards ! From a distance we see great questions outlined like the summits of mountains, and it is easy to say : ' I'll make an end of Calvinism ; I'll bring those Guises to task : I'll separate from the Court of Rome ; I'll rely upon my people, upon the burghers — ' ah ! yes, from afar it all seems simple enough ! but try to climb those mountains and the higher you go the more the difficulties appear. Calvinism, in itself, is the last thing the leaders of that party care for ; and the Guises, those rabid Catholics, would be sorry indeed to see the Calvinists put down. Each side considers its own interests exclusively, and religious opinions are but a cloak for insatiable ambition. The party of Charles IX. is the feeblest of all. That of the king of Navarre, that of the king of Poland, that of the Duc d'Alençon, that of the Condés, that of the Guises, that of my mother, are all intriguing one against another, but they take no account of me, not even in my own council. My mother, in the midst of so many contending elements, is, nevertheless, the strongest among them ; she has just proved to me the inanity of my plans. We are surrounded by rebellious subjects who defy the law. The axe of Louis XI. of which you speak, is lacking to us. Parliament would not condemn the Guises, nor the king of Navarre, nor the Condés, nor my brother. No ! the courage to

assassinate is needed; the throne will be forced to strike down those insolent men who suppress both law and justice; but where can we find the faithful arm? The council I held this morning has disgusted me with everything; treason everywhere; contending interests all about me. 'I am tired with the burden of my crown. I only want to die in peace.'

He dropped into a sort of gloomy somnolence.

"Disgusted with everything!" repeated Marie Touchet, sadly; but she did not disturb the black torpor of her lover.

Charles was the victim of a complete prostration of mind and body, produced by three things,—the exhaustion of all his faculties, aggravated by the disheartenment of realizing the extent of an evil; the recognized impossibility of surmounting his weakness; and the aspect of difficulties so great that genius itself would dread them. The king's depression was in proportion to the courage and the loftiness of ideas to which he had risen during the last few months. In addition to this, an attack of nervous melancholy, caused by his malady, had seized him as he left the protracted council which had taken place in his private cabinet. Marie saw that he was in one of those crises when the least word, even of love, would be importunate and painful; so she remained kneeling quietly beside him, her head on his knee, the king's hand buried in her hair, and he himself motionless, without a word, without a sigh, as still as Marie herself,—Charles IX. in the lethargy of impotence, Marie in the stupor of despair which comes to a loving woman when she perceives the boundaries at which love ends.

The lovers thus remained, in the deepest silence, during one of those terrible hours when all reflection wounds, when the clouds of an inward tempest veil even the memory of happiness. Marie believed that she herself was partly the cause of this frightful dejection. She asked herself, not without horror, if the excessive joys and the violent love which she had never yet found strength to resist, did not contribute to weaken the mind and body of the king. As she raised her eyes, bathed in tears, toward her lover, she saw the slow tears rolling down his pallid cheeks. This mark of the sympathy that united them so moved the king that he rushed from his depression like a spurred horse. He took Marie in his arms and placed her on the sofa.

"I will no longer be a king," he cried. "I will be your lover, your lover only, wholly given up to that happiness. I will die happy, and not consumed by the cares and miseries of a throne."

The tone of these words, the fire that shone in the half-extinct eyes of the king, gave Marie a terrible shock instead of happiness; she blamed her love as an accomplice in the malady of which the king was dying.

"Meanwhile you forget your prisoners," she said, rising abruptly.

"Hey! what care I for them? I give them leave to kill me."

"What! are they murderers?"

"Oh, don't be frightened, little one; we hold them fast. Don't think of them, but of me. Do you love me?"

"Sire!" she cried.

"Sire!" he repeated, sparks darting from his eyes,

so violent was the rush of his anger at the untimely respect of his mistress. "You are in league with my mother."

"O God!" cried Marie, looking at the picture above her *prie-dieu* and turning toward it to say her prayer, "grant that he comprehend me!"

"Ah!" said the king, suspiciously, "you have some wrong to me upon your conscience!" Then looking at her from between his arms, he plunged his eyes into hers. "I have heard some talk of the mad passion of a certain Entragues," he went on wildly. "Ever since their grandfather, the soldier Balzac, married a viscontessa at Milan that family hold their heads too high."

Marie looked at the king with so proud an air that he was ashamed. At that instant the cries of little Charles de Valois, who had just awakened, were heard in the next room. Marie ran to the door.

"Come in, Bourguignonne!" she said, taking the child from its nurse and carrying it to the king. "You are more of a child than he," she cried, half angry, half appeased.

"He is beautiful!" said Charles IX., taking his son in his arms.

"I alone know how like he is to you," said Marie; "already he has your smile and your gestures."

"So tiny as that!" said the king, laughing at her.

"Oh, I know men don't believe such things; but watch him, my Charlot, play with him. Look there! See! Am I not right?"

"True!" exclaimed the king, astonished by a motion of the child which seemed the very miniature of a gesture of his own.

“Ah, the pretty flower!” cried the mother. “Never shall he leave me! *He* will never cause me grief.”

The king frolicked with his son; he tossed him in his arms, and kissed him passionately, talking the foolish, unmeaning talk, the pretty, baby language invented by nurses and mothers. His voice grew child-like. At last his forehead cleared, joy returned to his saddened face, and then, as Marie saw that he had forgotten his troubles, she laid her head upon his shoulder and whispered in his ear:—

“Won't you tell me, Charlot, why you have made me keep murderers in my house? Who are these men, and what do you mean to do with them? In short, I want to know what you were doing on the roofs. I hope there was no woman in the business?”

“Then you love me as much as ever!” cried the king, meeting the clear, interrogatory glance that women know so well how to cast upon occasion.

“You doubted *me*,” she replied, as a tear shone on her beautiful eyelashes.

“There are women in my adventure,” said the king; “but they are sorceresses. How far had I told you?”

“You were on the roofs near by—what street was it?”

“Rue Saint-Honoré, sweetest,” said the king, who seemed to have recovered himself. Collecting his thoughts, he began to explain to his mistress what had happened, as if to prepare her for a scene that was presently to take place in her presence.

“As I was passing through the street last night on a frolic,” he said, “I chanced to see a bright light from the dormer window of the house occupied by René, my

mother's glover and perfumer, and once yours. I have strong doubts about that man and what goes on in his house. If I am poisoned, the drug will come from there."

"I shall dismiss him to-morrow."

"Ah! so you kept him after I had given him up?" cried the king. "I thought my life was safe with you," he added gloomily; "but no doubt death is following me even here."

"But, my dearest, I have only just returned from Dauphiné with our dauphin," she said, smiling, "and René has supplied me with nothing since the death of the Queen of Navarre. Go on; you climbed to the roof of René's house?"

IV.

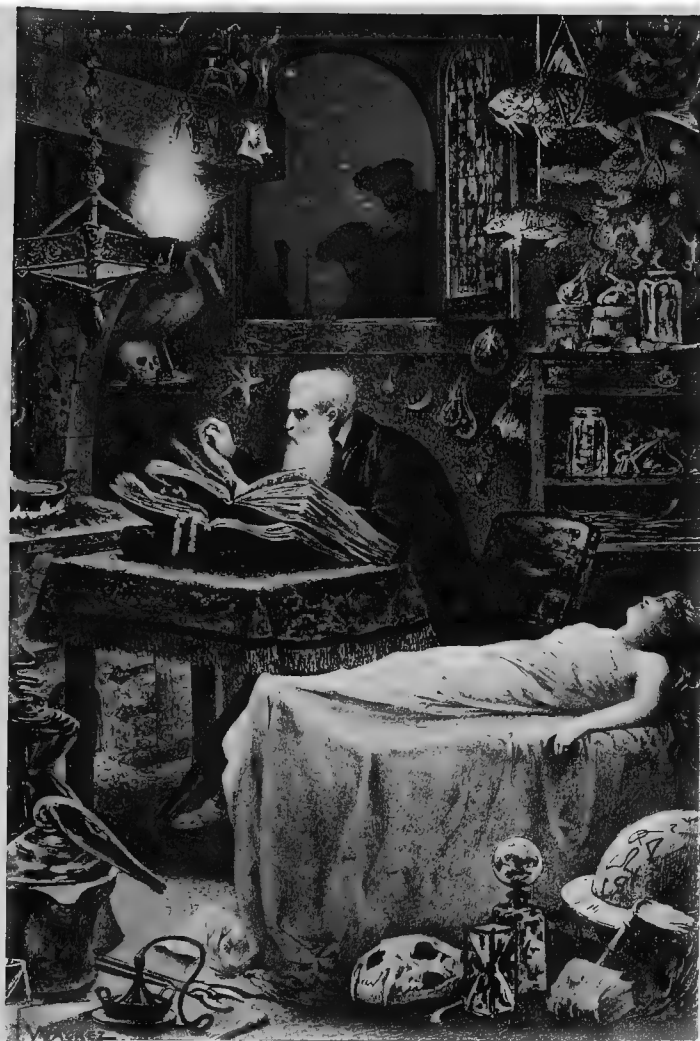
THE KING'S TALE.

“YES,” returned the king. “In a second I was there, followed by Tavannes, and then we clambered to a spot where I could see without being seen the interior of that devil’s kitchen, in which I beheld extraordinary things which inspired me to take certain measures. Did you ever notice the end of the roof of that cursèd perfumer? The windows toward the street are always closed and dark, except the last, from which can be seen the hôtel de Soissons and the observatory which my mother built for that astrologer, Cosmo Ruggiero. Under the roof are lodging-rooms and a gallery which have no windows except on the courtyard, so that in order to see what was going on within, it was necessary to go where no man before ever dreamed of climbing, — along the coping of a high wall which adjoins the roof of René’s house. The men who set up in that house the furnaces by which they distil death, reckoned on the cowardice of Parisians to save them from being overlooked; but they little thought of Charles de Valois! I crept along the coping until I came to a window, against the casing of which I was able to stand up straight with my arm round a carved monkey which ornamented it.”

“What did you see, dear heart?” said Marie, trembling.

“A den, where works of darkness were being done,” replied the king. “The first object on which my eyes lighted was a tall old man seated in a chair, with a magnificent white beard, like that of old l’Hôpital, and dressed like him in a black velvet robe. On his broad forehead furrowed deep with wrinkles, on his crown of white hair, on his calm, attentive face, pale with toil and vigils, fell the concentrated rays of a lamp from which shone a vivid light. His attention was divided between an old manuscript, the parchment of which must have been centuries old, and two lighted furnaces on which heretical compounds were cooking. Neither the floor nor the ceiling of the laboratory could be seen, because of the myriads of hanging skeletons, bodies of animals, dried plants, minerals, and articles of all kinds that masked the walls; while on the floor were books, instruments for distilling, chests filled with utensils for magic and astrology; in one place I saw horoscopes and nativities, phials, wax-figures under spells, and possibly poisons. Tavannes and I were fascinated, I do assure you, by the sight of this devil’s-arsenal. Only to see it puts one under a spell, and if I had not been King of France, I might have been awed by it. ‘You can tremble for both of us,’ I whispered to Tavannes. But Tavannes’ eyes were already caught by the most mysterious feature of the scene. On a couch, near the old man, lay a girl of strangest beauty, — slender and long like a snake, white as ermine, livid as death, motionless as a statue. Perhaps it was a woman just taken from her grave, on whom they were trying experiments, for she seemed to

*“ ‘ A den, where works of darkness were being done,’
replied the king.”*



wear a shroud ; her eyes were fixed, and I could not see that she breathed. The old fellow paid no attention to her. I looked at him so intently that, after a while, his soul seemed to pass into mine. By dint of studying him, I ended by admiring the glance of his eye, — so keen, so profound, so bold, in spite of the chilling power of age. I admired his mouth, mobile with thoughts emanating from a desire which seemed to be the solitary desire of his soul, and was stamped upon every line of the face. All things in that man expressed a hope which nothing discouraged, and nothing could check. His attitude, — a quivering immovability, — those outlines so free, carved by a single passion as by the chisel of a sculptor, that IDEA concentrated on some experiment criminal or scientific, that seeking Mind in quest of Nature, thwarted by her, bending but never broken under the weight of its own audacity, which it would not renounce, threatening creation with the fire it derived from it, — ah ! all that held me in a spell for the time being. I saw before me an old man who was more of a king than I, for his glance embraced the world and mastered it. I will forge swords no longer ; I will soar above the abysses of existence, like that man ; for his science, methinks, is true royalty ! Yes, I believe in occult science.”

“ You, the eldest son, the defender of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church ? ” said Marie.

“ I.”

“ What happened to you ? Go on, go on ; I will fear for you, and you will have courage for me.”

“ Looking at a clock, the old man rose,” continued the king. “ He went out, I don’t know where ; but I

heard the window on the side toward the rue Saint-Honoré open. Soon a brilliant light gleamed out upon the darkness; then I saw in the observatory of the hôtel de Soissons another light replying to that of the old man, and by it I beheld the figure of Cosmo Ruggiero on the tower. 'See, they communicate!' I said to Tavannes, who from that moment thought the matter frightfully suspicious, and agreed with me that we ought to seize the two men and search, incontinently, their accursed workshop. But before proceeding to do so, we wanted to see what was going to happen. After about fifteen minutes the door opened, and Cosmo Ruggiero, my mother's counsellor, — the bottomless pit which holds the secrets of the court, he from whom all the women ask help against their husbands and lovers, and all the men ask help against their unfaithful wives and mistresses, he who traffics on the future as on the past, receiving pay with both hands, who sells horoscopes and is supposed to know all things, — that semi-devil came in, saying to the old man, 'Good-day to you, brother.' With him he brought a hideous old woman, — toothless, humpbacked, twisted, bent, like a Chinese image, only worse. She was wrinkled as a withered apple; her skin was saffron-colored; her chin bit her nose; her mouth was a mere line scarcely visible; her eyes were like the black spots on a dice; her forehead emitted bitterness; her hair escaped in straggling gray locks from a dirty coif; she walked with a crutch; she smelt of heresy and witchcraft. The sight of her actually frightened us, Tavannes and me! We didn't think her a natural woman. God never made a woman so fearful as that. She sat down on a stool

near the pretty snake with whom Tavannes was in love. The two brothers paid no attention to the old woman nor to the young woman, who together made a horrible couple, — on the one side life in death, on the other death in life — ”

“ Ah ! my sweet poet ! ” cried Marie, kissing the king.

“ ‘ Good-day, Cosmo,’ replied the old alchemist. And they both looked into the furnace. ‘ What strength has the moon to-day ? ’ asked the elder. ‘ But, *caro Lorenzo*,’ replied my mother’s astrologer, ‘ the September tides are not yet over ; we can learn nothing while that disorder lasts.’ ‘ What says the East to-night ? ’ ‘ It discloses in the air a creative force which returns to earth all that earth takes from it. The conclusion is that all things here below are the product of a slow transformation, but that all diversities are the forms of one and the same substance.’ ‘ That is what my predecessor thought,’ replied Lorenzo. ‘ This morning Bernard Palissy told me that metals were the result of compression, and that fire, which divides all, also unites all ; fire has the power to compress as well as to separate. That man has genius.’ Though I was placed where it was impossible for them to see me, Cosmo said, lifting the hand of the dead girl : ‘ Some one is near us ! Who is it ? ’ ‘ The king,’ she answered. I at once showed myself and rapped on the window. Ruggiero opened it, and I sprang into that hellish kitchen, followed by Tavannes. ‘ Yes, the king,’ I said to the two Florentines, who seemed terrified. ‘ In spite of your furnaces and your books, your science and your sorceries, you did not foresee my visit. I am very glad to meet the famous Lorenzo Ruggiero, of whom my mother speaks mysteriously,’ I

said, addressing the old man, who rose and bowed. 'You are in this kingdom without my consent, my good man. For whom are you working here, you whose ancestors from father to son have been devoted in heart to the house of Medici? Listen to me! You dive into so many purses that by this time, if you are grasping men, you have piled up gold. You are too shrewd and cautious to cast yourselves imprudently into criminal actions; but, nevertheless, you are not here in this kitchen without a purpose. Yes, you have some secret scheme, you who are satisfied by neither gold nor power. Whom do you serve, — God or the devil? What are you concocting here? I choose to know the whole truth; I am a man who can hear it and keep silence about your enterprise, however blamable it may be. Therefore you will tell me all, without reserve. If you deceive me you will be treated severely. Pagans or Christians, Calvinists or Mohammedans, you have my royal word that you shall leave the kingdom in safety if you have any misdemeanors to relate. I shall leave you for the rest of the night and the forenoon of to-morrow to examine your thoughts; for you are now my prisoners, and you will at once follow me to a place where you will be guarded carefully.' Before obeying me the two Italians consulted each other by a subtle glance; then Lorenzo Ruggiero said I might be assured that no torture could wring their secrets from them; that in spite of their apparent feebleness neither pain nor human feelings had any power over them; confidence alone could make their mouth say what their mind contained. I must not, he said, be surprised if they treated as equals with a king who recognized God only

as above him, for their thoughts came from God alone. They therefore claimed from me as much confidence and trust as they should give to me. But before engaging themselves to answer me without reserve they must request me to put my left hand into that of the young girl lying there, and my right into that of the old woman. Not wishing them to think I was afraid of their sorcery, I held out my hands; Lorenzo took the right, Cosmo the left, and each placed a hand in that of each woman, so that I was like Jesus Christ between the two thieves. During the time that the two witches were examining my hands Cosmo held a mirror before me and asked me to look into it; his brother, meanwhile, was talking with the two women in a language unknown to me. Neither Tavannes nor I could catch the meaning of a single sentence. Before bringing the men here we put seals on all the outlets of the laboratory, which Tavannes undertook to guard until such time as, by my express orders, Bernard Palissy, and Chapelain, my physician, could be brought there to examine thoroughly the drugs the place contained and which were evidently made there. In order to keep the Ruggieri ignorant of this search, and to prevent them from communicating with a single soul outside, I put the two devils in your lower rooms in charge of Solern's Germans, who are better than the walls of a jail. René, the perfumer, is kept under guard in his own house by Solern's equerry, and so are the two witches. Now, my sweetest, inasmuch as I hold the keys of the whole cabal,—the kings of Thune, the chiefs of sorcery, the gipsy fortune-tellers, the masters of the future, the heirs of all past soothsayers,—I in-

tend by their means to read *you*, to know your heart; and, together, we will find what is to happen to us."

"I shall be glad if they can lay my heart bare before you," said Marie, without the slightest fear.

"I know why sorcerers don't frighten you, — because you are a witch yourself."

"Will you have a peach?" she said, offering him some delicious fruit on a gold plate. "See these grapes, these pears; I went to Vincennes myself and gathered them for you."

"Yes, I'll eat them; there is no poison there except a philter from your hands."

"You ought to eat a great deal of fruit, Charles; it would cool your blood, which you heat by such excitements."

"Must I love you less?"

"Perhaps so," she said. "If the things you love injure you — and I have feared it — I shall find strength in my love to refuse them. I adore Charles more than I love the king; I want the man to live, released from the tortures that make him grieve."

"Royalty has ruined me."

"Yes," she replied. "If you were only a poor prince, like your brother-in-law of Navarre, without a penny, possessing only a miserable little kingdom in Spain where he never sets his foot, and Béarn in France which does n't give him revenue enough to feed him, I should be happy, much happier than if I were really Queen of France."

"But you are more than the Queen of France. She has King Charles for the sake of the kingdom only; royal marriages are only politics."

Marie smiled and made a pretty little grimace as she said: "Yes, yes, I know that, sire. And my sonnet, have you written it?"

"Dearest, verses are as difficult to write as treaties of peace; but you shall have them soon. Ah, me! life is so easy here, I wish I might never leave you. However, we must send for those Italians and question them. *Tête-Dieu!* I thought one Ruggiero in the kingdom was one too many, but it seems there are two. Now listen, my precious; you don't lack sense, you would make an excellent lieutenant of police, for you can penetrate things —"

"But, sire, we women suppose all we fear, and we turn what is probable into truths; that is the whole of our art in a nutshell."

"Well, help me to sound these men. Just now all my plans depend on the result of their examination. Are they innocent? Are they guilty? My mother is behind them."

"I hear Jacob's voice in the next room," said Marie.

Jacob was the favorite valet of the king, and the one who accompanied him on all his private excursions. He now came to ask if it was the king's good pleasure to speak to the two prisoners. The king made a sign in the affirmative, and the mistress of the house gave her orders.

"Jacob," she said, "clear the house of everybody, except the nurse and Monsieur le Dauphin d'Auvergne, who may remain. As for you, stay in the lower hall; but first, close the windows, draw the curtains of the salon, and light the candles."

The king's impatience was so great that while these preparations were being made he sat down upon a raised seat at the corner of a lofty fireplace of white marble in which a bright fire was blazing, placing his pretty mistress by his side. His portrait, framed in velvet, was over the mantle in place of a mirror. Charles IX. rested his elbow on the arm of the seat as if to watch the two Florentines the better under cover of his hand.

The shutters closed, and the curtains drawn, Jacob lighted the wax tapers in a tall candelabrum of chased silver, which he placed on the table where the Florentines were to stand,—an object, by the bye, which they would readily recognize as the work of their compatriot, Benvenuto Cellini. The richness of the room, decorated in the taste of Charles IX., now shone forth. The red-brown of the tapestries showed to better advantage than by daylight. The various articles of furniture, delicately made or carved, reflected in their ebony panels the glow of the fire and the sparkle of the lights. Gilding, soberly applied, shone here and there like eyes, brightening the brown color which prevailed in this nest of love.

Jacob presently gave two knocks, and, receiving permission, ushered in the Italians. Marie Touchet was instantly affected by the grandeur of Lorenzo's presence, which struck all those who met him, great and small alike. The silvery whiteness of the old man's beard was heightened by a robe of black velvet; his brow was like a marble dome. His austere face, illumined by two black eyes which cast a pointed flame, conveyed an impression of genius issuing from solitude,

and all the more effective because its power had not been dulled by contact with men. It was like the steel of a blade that had never been fleshed.

As for Cosmo Ruggiero, he wore the dress of a courtier of the time. Marie made a sign to the king to assure him that he had not exaggerated his description, and to thank him for having shown her these extraordinary men.

“I would like to have seen the sorceresses, too,” she whispered in his ear.

V.

THE ALCHEMISTS.

AGAIN absorbed in thought, Charles IX. made her no answer ; he was idly flicking crumbs of bread from his doublet and breeches.

"Your science cannot change the heavens or make the sun to shine, messieurs," he said at last, pointing to the curtains which the gray atmosphere of Paris darkened.

"Our science can make the skies what we like, sire," replied Lorenzo Ruggiero. "The weather is always fine for those who work in a laboratory by the light of a furnace."

"That is true," said the king. "Well, father," he added, using an expression familiar to him when addressing old men, "explain to us clearly the object of your studies."

"What will guarantee our safety?"

"The word of a king," replied Charles IX., whose curiosity was keenly excited by the question.

Lorenzo Ruggiero seemed to hesitate, and Charles IX. cried out : "What hinders you? We are here alone."

"But is the King of France here?" asked Lorenzo.

Charles reflected an instant, and then answered, "No."

The imposing old man then took a chair, and seated himself. Cosmo, astonished at this boldness, dared not imitate it.

Charles IX. remarked, with cutting sarcasm: "The king is not here, monsieur, but a lady is, whose permission it was your duty to await."

"He whom you see before you, madame," said the old man, "is as far above kings as kings are above their subjects; you will think me courteous when you know my powers."

Hearing these audacious words, said with Italian emphasis, Charles and Marie looked at each other, and also at Cosmo, who, with his eyes fixed on his brother, seemed to be asking himself: "How does he intend to get us out of the danger in which we are?"

In fact, there was but one person present who could understand the boldness and the art of Lorenzo Ruggiero's first step; and that person was neither the king nor his young mistress, on whom the great seer had already flung the spell of his audacity, — it was Cosmo Ruggiero, his wily brother. Though superior himself to the ablest men at court, perhaps even to Catherine de' Medici herself, the astrologer always recognized his brother Lorenzo as his master.

Buried in studious solitude, the old savant weighed and estimated sovereigns, most of whom were worn out by the perpetual turmoil of politics, the crises of which at this period came so suddenly and were so keen, so intense, so unexpected. He knew their ennui, their lassitude, their disgust with things about them; he knew the ardor with which they sought what seemed to them new or strange or fantastic; above all, how

they loved to enter some unknown intellectual region to escape their endless struggle with men and events. To those who have exhausted statecraft, nothing remains but the realm of pure thought. Charles the Fifth proved this by his abdication. Charles IX., who wrote sonnets and forged blades to escape the exhausting cares of an age in which both throne and king were threatened, to whom royalty had brought only cares and never pleasures, was likely to be roused to a high pitch of interest by the bold denial of his power thus uttered by Lorenzo. Religious doubt was not surprising in an age when Catholicism was so violently arraigned; but the upsetting of all religion, given as the basis of a strange, mysterious art, would surely strike the king's mind, and drag it from its present preoccupations. The essential thing for the two brothers was to make the king forget his suspicions by turning his mind to new ideas.

The Ruggieri were well aware that their stake in this game was their own life, and the glances, so humble, and yet so proud, which they exchanged with the searching, suspicious eyes of Marie and the king, were a scene in themselves.

"Sire," said Lorenzo Ruggiero, "you have asked me for the truth; but, to show the truth in all her nakedness, I must also show you and make you sound the depths of the well from which she comes. I appeal to the gentleman and the poet to pardon words which the eldest son of the Church might take for blasphemy, — I believe that God does not concern himself with human affairs."

Though determined to maintain a kingly composure, Charles IX. could not repress a motion of surprise.

“Without that conviction I should have no faith whatever in the miraculous work to which my life is devoted. To do that work I must have this belief; and if the finger of God guides all things, then — I am a madman. Therefore, let the king understand, once for all, that this work means a victory to be won over the present course of Nature. I am an alchemist, sire. But do not think, as the common-minded do, that I seek to make gold. The making of gold is not the object but an incident of our researches; otherwise our toil could not be called the GREAT WORK. The Great Work is something far loftier than that. If, therefore, I were forced to admit the presence of God in matter, my voice must logically command the extinction of furnaces kept burning throughout the ages. But to deny the direct action of God in the world is not to deny God; do not make that mistake. We place the Creator of all things far higher than the sphere to which religions have degraded him. Do not accuse of atheism those who look for immortality. Like Lucifer, we are jealous of our God; and jealousy means love. Though the doctrine of which I speak is the basis of our work, all our disciples are not imbued with it. Cosmo,” said the old man, pointing to his brother, “Cosmo is devout; he pays for masses for the repose of our father’s soul, and he goes to hear them. Your mother’s astrologer believes in the divinity of Christ, in the Immaculate Conception, in Transubstantiation; he believes also in the pope’s indulgences and in hell, and in a multitude of such things. His hour has not yet come. I have drawn his horoscope; he will live to be almost a centenarian; he will live through two more reigns, and he will see two kings of France assassinated.”

“Who are they?” asked the king.

“The last of the Valois and the first of the Bourbons,” replied Lorenzo. “But Cosmo shares my opinion. It is impossible to be an alchemist and a Catholic, to have faith in the despotism of man over matter, and also in the sovereignty of the divine.”

“Cosmo to die a centenarian!” exclaimed the king, with his terrible frown of the eyebrows.

“Yes, sire,” replied Lorenzo, with authority; “and he will die peaceably in his bed.”

“If you have power to foresee the moment of your death, why are you ignorant of the outcome of your researches?” asked the king.

Charles XI. smiled as he said this, looking triumphantly at Marie Touchet. The brothers exchanged a rapid glance of satisfaction.

“He begins to be interested,” thought they. “We are saved!”

“Our prognostics depend on the immediate relations which exist at the time between man and Nature; but our purpose itself is to change those relations entirely,” replied Lorenzo.

The king was thoughtful.

“But, if you are certain of dying you are certain of defeat,” he said, at last.

“Like our predecessors,” replied Lorenzo, raising his hand and letting it fall again with an emphatic and solemn gesture, which presented visibly the grandeur of his thought. “But your mind has bounded to the confines of the matter, sire; we must return upon our steps. If you do not know the ground on which our edifice is built, you may well think it doomed to crumble

with our lives, and so judge the Science cultivated from century to century by the greatest among men, as the common herd judge of it."

The king made a sign of assent.

"I think," continued Lorenzo, "that this earth belongs to man; he is the master of it, and he can appropriate to his use all forces and all substances. Man is not a creation issuing directly from the hand of God; but the development of a principle sown broadcast into the infinite of ether, from which millions of creatures are produced, — differing beings in different worlds, because the conditions surrounding life are varied. Yes, sire, the subtle element which we call *life* takes its rise beyond the visible worlds; creation divides that principle according to the centres into which it flows; and all beings, even the lowest, share it, taking so much as they can take of it at their own risk and peril. It is for them to protect themselves from death, — the whole purpose of alchemy lies there, sire. If man, the most perfect animal on this globe, bore within himself a portion of the divine, he would not die; but he does die. To solve this difficulty, Socrates and his school invented the Soul. I, the successor of so many great and unknown kings, the rulers of this science, I stand for the ancient theories, not the new. I believe in the transformations of matter which I see, and not in the possible eternity of a soul which I do not see. I do not recognize that world of the soul. If such a world existed, the substances whose magnificent conjunction produced your body, and are so dazzling in that of Madame, would not resolve themselves after your death each into its own element, water to water,

fire to fire, metal to metal, just as the elements of my coal, when burned, return to their primitive molecules. If you believe that a certain part of us survives, *we* do not survive; for all that makes our actual being perishes. Now, it is this actual being that I am striving to continue beyond the limit assigned to life; it is our present transformation to which I wish to give a greater duration. Why! the trees live for centuries, but man lives only years, though the former are passive, the others active; the first motionless and speechless, the others gifted with language and motion. No created thing should be superior in this world to man, either in power or in duration. Already we are widening our perceptions, for we look into the stars; therefore ought to lengthen the duration of our lives. I place life before power. What good is power if life escapes us? A wise man should have no other purpose than to seek, not whether he has some other life within him, but the secret springs of his actual form, in order that he may prolong its existence at his will. That is the desire which has whitened my hair; but I walk boldly in the darkness, marshalling to the search all those great intellects that share my faith. Life will some day be ours,—ours to control.”

“Ah! but how?” cried the king, rising hastily.

“The first condition of our faith being that the earth belongs to man, you must grant me that point,” said Lorenzo.

“So be it!” said Charles de Valois, already under the spell.

“Then, sire, if we take God out of this world, what

remains? Man. Let us therefore examine our domain. The material world is composed of elements; these elements are themselves principles; these principles resolve themselves into an ultimate principle, endowed with motion. The number THREE is the formula of creation: Matter, Motion, Product."

"Stop!" cried the king, "what proof is there of this?"

"Do you not see the effects?" replied Lorenzo. "We have tried in our crucibles the acorn which produces the oak, and the embryo from which grows a man; from this tiny substance results a single principle, to which some force, some movement must be given. Since there is no overruling creator, this principle must give to itself the outward forms which constitute our world—for this phenomenon of life is the same everywhere. Yes, for metals as for human beings, for plants as for men, life begins in an imperceptible embryo which develops itself. A primitive principle exists; let us seize it at the point where it begins to act upon itself, where it is a unit, where it is a principle before taking definite form, a cause before being an effect; we must see it single, without form, susceptible of clothing itself with all the outward forms we shall see it take. When we are face to face with this atomic particle, when we shall have caught its movement at the very instant of motion, *then* we shall know the law; thenceforth we are the masters of life, masters who can impose upon that principle the form we choose,—with gold to win the world, and the power to make for ourselves centuries of life in which to enjoy it! That is what my people and I are seeking. All our strength,

all our thoughts are strained in that direction ; nothing distracts us from it. One hour wasted on any other passion is a theft committed against our true grandeur. Just as you have never found your hounds relinquishing the hunted animal or failing to be in at the death, so I have never seen one of my patient disciples diverted from this great quest by the love of woman or a selfish thought. If an adept seeks power and wealth, the desire is instigated by our needs ; he grasps treasure as a thirsty dog laps water while he swims a stream, because his crucibles are in need of a diamond to melt or an ingot of gold to reduce to powder. To each his own work. One seeks the secret of vegetable nature ; he watches the slow life of plants ; he notes the parity of motion among all the species, and the parity of their nutrition ; he finds everywhere the need of sun and air and water, to fecundate and nourish them. Another scrutinizes the blood of animals. A third studies the laws of universal motion and its connection with celestial revolutions. Nearly all are eager to struggle with the intractable nature of metal, for while we find many principles in other things, we find all metals like unto themselves in every particular. Hence a common error as to our work. Behold these patient, indefatigable athletes, ever vanquished, yet ever returning to the combat ! Humanity, sire, is behind us, as the huntsman is behind your hounds. She cries to us : ' Make haste ! neglect nothing ! sacrifice all, even a man, ye who sacrifice yourselves ! Hasten ! hasten ! Beat down the arms of DEATH, mine enemy ! ' Yes, sire, we are inspired by a hope which involves the happiness of all coming generations. We have buried many

men — and what men! — dying of this Search. Setting foot in this career we cannot work for ourselves; we may die without discovering the Secret; and our death is that of those who do not believe in another life; it is this life that we have sought, and failed to perpetuate. We are glorious martyrs; we have the welfare of the race at heart; we have failed but we live again in our successors. As we go through this existence we discover secrets with which we endow the liberal and the mechanical arts. From our furnaces gleam lights which illumine industrial enterprises, and perfect them. Gunpowder issued from our alembics; nay, we have mastered the lightning. In our persistent vigils lie political revolutions.”

“Can this be true?” cried the king, springing once more from his chair.

“Why not?” said the grand-master of the new Templars. “*Tradidit mundum disputationibus!* God has given us the earth. Hear this once more: man is master here below; matter is his; all forces, all means are at his disposal. Who created us? Motion. What power maintains life in us? Motion. Why cannot science seize the secret of that motion? Nothing is lost here below; nothing escapes from our planet to go elsewhere, — otherwise the stars would stumble over each other; the waters of the deluge are still with us in their principle, and not a drop is lost. Around us, above us, beneath us, are to be found the elements from which have come innumerable hosts of men who have crowded the earth before and since the deluge. What is the secret of our struggle? To discover the force that disunites, and then, *then* we

shall discover that which binds. We are the product of a visible manufacture. When the waters covered the globe men issued from them who found the elements of their life in the crust of the earth, in the air, and in the nourishment derived from them. Earth and air possess, therefore, the principle of human transformations; those transformations take place under our eyes, by means of that which is also under our eyes. We are able, therefore, to discover that secret, — not limiting the effort of the search to one man or to one age, but devoting humanity in its duration to it. We are engaged, hand to hand, in a struggle with Matter, into whose secret, I, the grand-master of our order, seek to penetrate. Christopher Columbus gave a world to the King of Spain; I seek an ever-living people for the King of France. Standing on the confines which separate us from a knowledge of material things, a patient observer of atoms, I destroy forms, I dissolve the bonds of combinations; I imitate death that I may learn how to imitate life. I strike incessantly at the door of creation, and I shall continue so to strike till the day of my death. When I am dead the knocker will pass into other hands equally persistent with those of the mighty men who handed it to me. Fabulous and uncomprehended beings, like Prometheus, Ixion, Adonis, Pan, and others, who have entered into the religious beliefs of all countries and all ages, prove to the world that the hopes we now embody were born with the human races. Chaldea, India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, the Moors, have transmitted from one to another Magic, the highest of all the occult sciences, which holds within it as a precious

deposit the fruits of the studies of each generation. In it lay the tie that bound the grand and majestic institution of the Templars. Sire, when one of your predecessors burned the Templars, he burned men only, — their Secret lived. The reconstruction of the Temple is the vow of an unknown nation, a race of daring seekers, whose faces are turned to the Orient of *life*, — all brothers, all inseparable, all united by one idea, and stamped with the mark of toil. I am the sovereign leader of that people, sovereign by election, not by birth. I guide them onward to a knowledge of the essence of life. Grand-master, Red-Cross-bearers, companions, adepts, we forever follow the imperceptible molecule which still escapes our eyes. But soon we shall make for ourselves eyes more powerful than those which Nature has given us; we shall attain to a sight of the primitive atom, the corpuscular element so persistently sought by the wise and learned of all ages who have preceded us in the glorious search. Sire, when a man is astride of that abyss, when he commands bold divers like my disciples, all other human interests are as nothing. Therefore we are not dangerous. Religious disputes and political struggles are far away from us; we have passed beyond and above them. No man takes others by the throat when his whole strength is given to a struggle with Nature. Besides, in our science results are perceivable; we can measure effects and predict them; whereas all things are uncertain and vacillating in the struggles of men and their selfish interests. We decompose the diamond in our crucibles, and we shall make diamonds, we shall make gold! We shall impel vessels (as they have at

Barcelona) with fire and a little water ! We test the wind, and we shall make wind ; we shall make light ; we shall renew the face of empires with new industries ! But we shall never debase ourselves to mount a throne to be crucified by the peoples ! ”

In spite of his strong determination not be taken in by Italian wiles, the king, together with his gentle mistress, was already caught and snared by the ambiguous phrases and doublings of this pompous and humbugging loquacity. The eyes of the two lovers showed how their minds were dazzled by the mysterious riches of power thus displayed ; they saw, as it were, a series of subterranean caverns filled with gnomes at their toil. The impatience of their curiosity put to flight all suspicion.

“ But,” cried the king, “ if this be so, you are great statesmen who can enlighten us.”

“ No, sire,” said Lorenzo, naively.

“ Why not ? ” asked the king.

“ Sire, it is not given to any man to foresee what will happen when thousands of men are gathered together. We can tell what one man will do, how long he will live, whether he will be happy or unhappy ; but we cannot tell what a collection of wills may do ; and to calculate the oscillations of their selfish interests is more difficult still, for interests are men *plus* things. We can, in solitude, see the future as a whole, and that is all. The Protestantism that now torments you will be destroyed in turn by its material consequences, which will turn to theories in due time. Europe is at the present moment getting the better of religion ; to-morrow it will attack royalty.”

"Then the Saint-Bartholomew was a great conception?"

"Yes, sire; for if the people triumph it will have a Saint-Bartholomew of its own. When religion and royalty are destroyed the people will attack the nobles; after the nobles, the rich. When Europe has become a mere troop of men without consistence or stability, because without leaders, it will fall a prey to brutal conquerors. Twenty times already has the world seen that sight, and Europe is now preparing to renew it. Ideas consume the ages as passions consume men. When man is cured, humanity may possibly cure itself. Science is the essence of humanity, and we are its pontiffs; whoso concerns himself about the essence cares little about the individual life."

"To what have you attained, so far?" asked the king.

"We advance slowly; but we lose nothing that we have won."

"Then you are the king of sorcerers?" retorted the king, piqued at being of no account in the presence of this man.

The majestic grand-master of the Rosicrucians cast a look on Charles IX. which withered him.

"You are the king of men," he said; "I am the king of ideas. If we were sorcerers, you would already have burned us. We have had our martyrs."

"But by what means are you able to cast nativities?" persisted the king. "How did you know that the man who came to your window last night was King of France? What power authorized one of you to tell my mother the fate of her three sons? Can you, grand-

master of an art which claims to mould the world, can you tell me what my mother is planning at this moment?"

"Yes, sire."

This answer was given before Cosmo could pull his brother's robe to enjoin silence.

"Do you know why my brother, the King of Poland, has returned?"

"Yes, sire."

"Why?"

"To take your place."

"Our most cruel enemies are our nearest in blood!" exclaimed the king, violently, rising and walking about the room with hasty steps. "Kings have neither brothers, nor sons, nor mothers. Coligny was right; my murderers are not among the Huguenots, but in the Louvre. You are either impostors or regicides!—Jacob, call Solern."

"Sire," said Marie Touchet, "the Ruggieri have your word as a gentleman. You wanted to taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; do not complain of its bitterness."

The king smiled, with an expression of bitter self-contempt; he thought his material royalty petty in presence of the august intellectual royalty of Lorenzo Ruggiero. Charles IX. knew that he could scarcely govern France, but this grand-master of Rosicrucians ruled a submissive and intelligent world.

"Answer me truthfully; I pledge my word as a gentleman that your answer, in case it confesses dreadful crimes, shall be as if it were never uttered," resumed the king. "Do you deal with poisons?"

"To discover that which gives life, we must also have full knowledge of that which kills."

"Do you possess the secret of many poisons?"

"Yes, sire, — in theory, but not in practice. We understand all poisons, but do not use them."

"Has my mother asked you for any?" said the king, breathlessly.

"Sire," replied Lorenzo, "Queen Catherine is too able a woman to employ such means. She knows that the sovereign who poisons dies by poison. The Borgias, also Bianca Capello, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, are noted examples of the dangers of that miserable resource. All things are known at courts; there can be no concealment. It may be possible to kill a poor devil — and what is the good of that? — but to aim at great men cannot be done secretly. Who shot Coligny? It could only be you, or the queen-mother, or the Guises. Not a soul is doubtful of that. Believe me, poison cannot be twice used with impunity in statecraft. Princes have successors. As for other men, if, like Luther, they are sovereigns through the power of ideas, their doctrines are not killed by killing them. The queen is from Florence; she knows that poison should never be used except as a weapon of personal revenge. My brother, who has not been parted from her since her arrival in France, knows the grief that Madame Diane caused your mother. But she never thought of poisoning her, though she might easily have done so. What could your father have said? Never had a woman a better right to do it; and she could have done it with impunity; but Madame de Valentinois still lives."

"But what of those waxen images?" asked the king.

"Sire," said Cosmo, "these things are so absolutely harmless that we lend ourselves to the practice to satisfy blind passions, just as physicians give bread pills to imaginary invalids. A disappointed woman fancies that by stabbing the heart of a wax-figure she has brought misfortunes upon the head of the man who has been unfaithful to her. What harm in that? Besides, it is our revenue."

"The pope sells indulgences," said Lorenzo Ruggiero, smiling.

"Has my mother practised these spells with waxen images?"

"What good would such harmless means be to one who has the actual power to do all things?"

"Has Queen Catherine the power to save you at this moment?" inquired the king, in a threatening manner.

"Sire, we are not in any danger," replied Lorenzo, tranquilly. "I knew before I came into this house that I should leave it safely, just as I know that the king will be evilly disposed to my brother Cosmo a few weeks hence. My brother may run some danger then, but he will escape it. If the king reigns by the sword, he also reigns by justice," added the old man, alluding to the famous motto on a medal struck for Charles IX.

"You know all, and you know that I shall die soon, which is very well," said the king, hiding his anger under nervous impatience; "but how will my brother die, — he whom you say is to be Henri III.?"

"By a violent death."

"And the Duc d'Alençon?"

"He will not reign."

"Then Henri de Bourbon will be king of France?"

"Yes, sire."

"How will he die?"

"By a violent death."

"When I am dead what will become of madame?" asked the king, motioning to Marie Touchet.

"Madame de Belleville will marry, sire."

"You are impostors!" cried Marie Touchet. "Send them away, sire."

"Dearest, the Ruggieri have my word as a gentleman," replied the king, smiling. "Will madame have children?" he continued.

"Yes, sire; and madame will live to be more than eighty years old."

"Shall I order them to be hanged?" said the king to his mistress. "But about my son, the Comte d'Auvergne?" he continued, going into the next room to fetch the child.

"Why did you tell him I should marry?" said Marie to the two brothers, the moment they were alone.

"Madame," replied Lorenzo, with dignity, "the king bound us to tell the truth, and we have told it."

"Is that true?" she exclaimed.

"As true as it is that the governor of the city of Orléans is madly in love with you."

"But I do not love him," she cried.

"That is true, madame," replied Lorenzo; "but your horoscope declares that you will marry the man who is in love with you at the present time."

"Can you not lie a little for my sake?" she said smiling; "for if the king believes your predictions —"

"Is it not also necessary that he should believe in our innocence?" interrupted Cosmo, with a wily glance at the young favorite. "The precautions taken against us by the king have made us think during the time we have spent in your charming jail that the occult sciences have been traduced to him."

"Do not feel uneasy," replied Mary. "I know him; his suspicions are at an end."

"We are innocent," said the grand-master of the Rosicrucians, proudly.

"So much the better for you," said Marie, "for your laboratory, and your retorts and phials are now being searched by order of the king."

The brothers looked at each other smiling. Marie Touchet took that smile for one of innocence, though it really signified: "Poor fools! can they suppose that if we brew poisons, we do not hide them?"

"Where are the king's searchers?"

"In René's laboratory," replied Marie.

Again the brothers glanced at each other with a look which said: "The hôtel de Soissons is inviolable."

The king had so completely forgotten his suspicions that when, as he took his boy in his arms, Jacob gave him a note from Chapelain, he opened it with the certainty of finding in his physician's report that nothing had been discovered in the laboratory but what related exclusively to alchemy.

"Will he live a happy man?" asked the king, presenting his son to the two alchemists.

"That is a question which concerns Cosmo," replied Lorenzo, signing to his brother.

Cosmo took the tiny hand of the child, and examined it carefully.

“Monsieur,” said Charles IX. to the old man, “if you find it necessary to deny the existence of the soul in order to believe in the possibility of your enterprise, will you explain to me why you should doubt what your power does? Thought, which you seek to nullify, is the certainty, the torch which lights your researches. Ha! ha! is not that the motion of a spirit within you, while you deny such motion?” cried the king, pleased with his argument, and looking triumphantly at his mistress.

“Thought,” replied Lorenzo Ruggiero, “is the exercise of an inward sense; just as the faculty of seeing several objects and noticing their size and color is an effect of sight. It has no connection with what people choose to call another life. Thought is a faculty which ceases, with the forces which produced it, when we cease to breathe.”

“You are logical,” said the king, surprised. “But alchemy must therefore be an atheistical science.”

“A materialist science, sire, which is a very different thing. Materialism is the outcome of Indian doctrines, transmitted through the mysteries of Isis to Chaldea and Egypt, and brought to Greece by Pythagoras, one of the demigods of humanity. His doctrine of re-incarnation is the mathematics of materialism, the vital law of its phases. To each of the different creations which form the terrestrial creation belongs the power of retarding the movement which sweeps on the rest.”

“Alchemy is the science of sciences!” cried Charles IX., enthusiastically. “I want to see you at work.”

“Whenever it pleases you, sire; you cannot be more interested than Madame the Queen-mother.”

"Ah! so this is why she cares for you?" exclaimed the king.

"The house of Medici has secretly protected our Search for more than a century."

"Sire," said Cosmo, "this child will live nearly a hundred years; he will have trials; nevertheless, he will be happy and honored, because he has in his veins the blood of the Valois."

"I will go and see you in your laboratory, messieurs," said the king, his good-humor quite restored. "You may now go."

The brothers bowed to Marie and to the king and then withdrew. They went down the steps of the portico gravely, without looking or speaking to each other; neither did they turn their faces to the windows as they crossed the courtyard, feeling sure that the king's eye watched them. But as they passed sideways out of the gate into the street they looked back and saw Charles IX. gazing after them from a window. When the alchemist and the astrologer were safely in the rue de l'Antruche, they cast their eyes before and behind them, to see if they were followed or overheard; then they continued their way to the moat of the Louvre without uttering a word. Once there, however, feeling themselves securely alone, Lorenzo said to Cosmo, in the Tuscan Italian of that day: —

"Affé d'Iddio! how we have fooled him!"

"Much good may it do him; let him make what he can of it!" said Cosmo. "We have given him a helping hand, — whether the queen pays it back to us or not."

Some days after this scene, which struck the king's

mistress as forcibly as it did the king, Marie suddenly exclaimed, in one of those moments when the soul seems, as it were, disengaged from the body in the plenitude of happiness:—

“Charles, I understand Lorenzo Ruggiero; but did you observe that Cosmo said nothing?”

“True,” said the king, struck by that sudden light. “After all, there was as much falsehood as truth in what they said. Those Italians are as supple as the silk they weave.”

This suspicion explains the rancor which the king showed against Cosmo when the trial of La Mole and Coconnas took place a few weeks later. Finding him one of the agents in that conspiracy, he thought the Italians had tricked him; for it was proved that his mother’s astrologer was not exclusively concerned with stars, the powder of projection, and the primitive atom. Lorenzo had by that time left the kingdom.

In spite of the incredulity which most persons show in these matters, the events which followed the scene we have narrated confirmed the predictions of the Ruggieri.

The king died within three months.

Charles de Gondi followed Charles IX. to the grave, as had been foretold to him jestingly by his brother the Maréchal de Retz, a friend of the Ruggieri, who believed in their predictions.

Marie Touchet married Charles de Balzac, Marquis d’Entragues, the governor of Orléans, by whom she had two daughters. The most celebrated of these daughters, the half-sister of the Comte d’Auvergne, was the mistress of Henri IV., and it was she who endeavored, at

the time of Biron's conspiracy, to put her brother on the throne of France by driving out the Bourbons.

The Comte d'Auvergne, who became the Duc d'Angoulême, lived into the reign of Louis XIV. He coined money on his estates and altered the inscriptions; but Louis XIV. let him do as he pleased, out of respect for the blood of the Valois.

Cosmo Ruggiero lived till the middle of the reign of Louis XIII.; he witnessed the fall of the house of the Medici in France, also that of the Concini. History has taken pains to record that he died an atheist, that is, a materialist.

The Marquise d'Entragues was over eighty when she died.

The famous Comte de Saint-Germain, who made so much noise under Louis XIV., was a pupil of Lorenzo and Cosmo Ruggiero. This celebrated alchemist lived to be one hundred and thirty years old, — an age which some biographers give to Marion de Lorme. He must have heard from the Ruggieri the various incidents of the Saint-Bartholomew and of the reigns of the Valois kings, which he afterwards recounted in the first person singular, as though he had played a part in them. The Comte de Saint-Germain was the last of the alchemists who knew how to clearly explain their science; but he left no writings. The cabalistic doctrine presented in this Study is that taught by this mysterious personage.

And here, behold a strange thing! Three lives, that of the old man from whom I have obtained these facts, that of the Comte de Saint-Germain, and that of Cosmo Ruggiero, suffice to cover the whole of European history

from François I. to Napoleon! Only fifty such lives are needed to reach back to the first known period of the world. "What are fifty generations for the study of the mysteries of life?" said the Comte de Saint-Germain.

PART THIRD.

I

TWO DREAMS.

IN 1786 Bodard de Saint-James, treasurer of the navy, excited more attention and gossip as to his luxury than any other financier in Paris. At this period he was building his famous "Folie" at Neuilly, and his wife had just bought a set of feathers to crown the tester of her bed, the price of which had been too great for even the queen to pay.

Bodard owned the magnificent mansion in the place Vendôme, which the *fermier-général*, Dangé, had lately been forced to leave. That celebrated epicurean was now dead, and on the day of his interment his intimate friend, Monsieur de Bièvre, raised a laugh by saying that he "could now pass through the place Vendôme without *danger*." This allusion to the hellish gambling which went on in the dead man's house, was his only funeral oration. The house is opposite to the Chancellerie.

To end in a few words the history of Bodard, — he became a poor man, having failed for fourteen millions after the bankruptcy of the Prince de Guéménée. The stupidity he showed in not anticipating that "serenissime

disaster," to use the expression of Lebrun Pindare, was the reason why no notice was taken of his misfortunes. He died, like Bourvalais, Bouret, and so many others, in a garret.

Madame Bodard de Saint-James was ambitious, and professed to receive none but persons of quality at her house, — an old absurdity which is ever new. To her thinking, even the parliamentary judges were of small account; she wished for titled persons in her salons, or at all events, those who had the right of entrance at court. To say that many *cordons bleus* were seen at her house would be false; but it is quite certain that she managed to obtain the good-will and civilities of several members of the house of Rohan, as was proved later in the affair of the too celebrated diamond necklace.

One evening — it was, I think, in August, 1786 — I was much surprised to meet in the salons of this lady, so exacting in the matter of gentility, two new faces which struck me as belonging to men of inferior social position. She came to me presently in the embrasure of a window where I had ensconced myself.

"Tell me," I said to her, with a glance toward one of the new-comers, "who and what is that queer species? Why do you have that kind of thing here?"

"He is charming."

"Do you see him through a prism of love, or am I blind?"

"You are not blind," she said, laughing. "The man is as ugly as a caterpillar; but he has done me the most immense service a woman can receive from a man."

As I looked at her rather maliciously she hastened to add: "He's a physician, and he has completely cured me of those odious red blotches which spoiled my complexion and made me look like a peasant woman."

I shrugged my shoulders with disgust.

"He is a charlatan."

"No," she said, "he is the surgeon of the court pages. He has a fine intellect, I assure you; in fact, he is a writer, and a very learned man."

"Heavens! if his style resembles his face!" I said scoffingly. "But who is the other?"

"What other?"

"That spruce, affected little popinjay over there, who looks as if he had been drinking verjuice."

"He is rather a well-born man," she replied; "just arrived from some province, I forget which — oh! from Artois. He is sent here to conclude an affair in which the Cardinal de Rohan is interested, and his Eminence in person has just presented him to Monsieur de Saint-James. It seems they have both chosen my husband as arbitrator. The provincial did n't show his wisdom in that; but fancy what simpletons the people who sent him here must be to trust a case to a man of his sort! He is as meek as a sheep and as timid as a girl. His Eminence is very kind to him."

"What is the nature of the affair?"

"Oh! a question of three hundred thousand francs."

"Then the man is a lawyer?" I said, with a slight shrug.

"Yes," she replied.

Somewhat confused by this humiliating avowal, Madame Bodard returned to her place at a faro-table.

All the tables were full. I had nothing to do, no one to speak to, and I had just lost two thousand crowns to Monsieur de Laval. I flung myself on a sofa near the fireplace. Presently, if there was ever a man on earth most utterly astonished it was I, when, on looking up, I saw, seated on another sofa on the opposite side of the fireplace, Monsieur de Calonne, the comptroller-general. He seemed to be dozing, or else he was buried in one of those deep meditations which overtake statesmen. When I pointed out the famous minister to Beaumarchais, who happened to come near me at that moment, the father of Figaro explained the mystery of his presence in that house without uttering a word. He pointed first at my head, then at Bodard's with a malicious gesture which consisted in turning to each of us two fingers of his hand while he kept the others doubled up. My first impulse was to rise and say something rousing to Calonne; then I paused, first, because I thought of a trick I could play the statesman, and secondly, because Beaumarchais caught me familiarly by the hand.

"Why do you do that, monsieur?" I said.

He winked at the comptroller.

"Don't wake him," he said in a low voice. "A man is happy when asleep."

"Pray, is sleep a financial scheme?" I whispered.

"Indeed, yes!" said Calonne, who had guessed our words from the mere motion of our lips. "Would to God we could sleep long, and then the awakening you are about to see would never happen."

"Monseigneur," said the dramatist, "I must thank you —"

"For what?"

"Monsieur de Mirabeau has started for Berlin. I don't know whether we might not both have drowned ourselves in that affair of 'les Eaux.'"

"You have too much memory, and too little gratitude," replied the minister, annoyed at having one of his secrets divulged in my presence.

"Possibly," said Beaumarchais, cut to the quick; "but I have millions that can balance many a score."

Calonne pretended not to hear.

It was long past midnight when the play ceased. Supper was announced. There were ten of us at table: Bodard and his wife, Calonne, Beaumarchais, the two strange men, two pretty women, whose names I will not give here, a *fermier-général*, Lavoisier, and myself. Out of thirty guests who were in the salon when I entered it, only these ten remained. The two *queer species* did not consent to stay until they were urged to do so by Madame Bodard, who probably thought she was paying her obligations to the surgeon by giving him something to eat, and pleasing her husband (with whom she appeared, I don't precisely know why, to be coquetting) by inviting the lawyer.

The supper began by being frightfully dull. The two strangers and the *fermier-général* oppressed us. I made a sign to Beaumarchais to intoxicate the son of Esculapius, who sat on his right, giving him to understand that I would do the same by the lawyer, who was next to me. As there seemed no other way to amuse ourselves, and it offered a chance to draw out the two men, who were already sufficiently singular, Monsieur de Calonne smiled at our project. The ladies present

also shared in the bacchanal conspiracy, and the wine of Sillery crowned our glasses again and again with its silvery foam. The surgeon was easily managed; but at the second glass which I offered to my neighbor the lawyer, he told me with the frigid politeness of a usurer that he should drink no more.

At this instant Madame de Saint-James chanced to introduce, I scarcely know how, the topic of the marvellous suppers to the Comte de Cagliostro, given by the Cardinal de Rohan. My mind was not very attentive to what the mistress of the house was saying, because I was watching with extreme curiosity the pinched and livid face of my little neighbor, whose principal feature was a turned-up and at the same time pointed nose, which made him, at times, look very like a weasel. Suddenly his cheeks flushed as he caught the words of a dispute between Madame de Saint-James and Monsieur de Calonne.

"But I assure you, monsieur," she was saying, with an imperious air, "that I *saw* Cleopatra, the queen."

"I can believe it, madame," said my neighbor, "for I myself have spoken to Catherine de' Medici."

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Monsieur de Calonne.

The words uttered by the little provincial were said in a voice of strange sonorousness, if I may be permitted to borrow that expression from the science of physics. This sudden clearness of intonation, coming from a man who had hitherto scarcely spoken, and then in a low and modulated tone, surprised all present exceedingly.

"Why, he is talking!" said the surgeon, who was now in a satisfactory state of drunkenness, addressing Beaumarchais.

"His neighbor must have pulled his wires," replied the satirist.

My man flushed again as he overheard the words, though they were said in a low voice.

"And pray, how was the late queen?" asked Calonne, jestingly.

"I will not swear that the person with whom I supped last night at the house of Cardinal de Rohan was Catherine de' Medici in person. That miracle would justly seem impossible to Christians as well as to philosophers," said the little lawyer, resting the tips of his fingers on the table, and leaning back in his chair as if preparing to make a speech. "Nevertheless, I do assert that the woman I saw resembled Catherine de' Medici as closely as though they were twin-sisters. She was dressed in a black velvet gown, precisely like that of the queen in the well-known portrait which belongs to the king; on her head was the pointed velvet coif, which is characteristic of her; and she had the wan complexion, and the features we all know well. I could not help betraying my surprise to his Eminence. The suddenness of the evocation seemed to me all the more amazing because Monsieur de Cagliostro had been unable to divine the name of the person with whom I wished to communicate. I was confounded. The magical spectacle of a supper, where one of the illustrious women of past times presented herself, took from me my presence of mind. I listened without daring to question. When I roused myself about midnight from the spell of that magic, I was inclined to doubt my senses. But even this great marvel seemed natural in comparison with the singular hallucination to

which I was presently subjected. I don't know in what words I can describe to you the state of my senses. But I declare, in the sincerity of my heart, I no longer wonder that souls have been found weak enough, or strong enough, to believe in the mysteries of magic and in the power of demons. For myself, until I am better informed, I regard as possible the apparitions which Cardan and other thaumaturgists describe."

These words, said with indescribable eloquence of tone, were of a nature to rouse the curiosity of all present. We looked at the speaker and kept silence; our eyes alone betrayed our interest, their pupils reflecting the light of the wax-candles in the sconces. By dint of observing this unknown little man, I fancied I could see the pores of his skin, especially those of his forehead, emitting an inward sentiment with which he was saturated. This man, apparently so cold and formal, seemed to contain within him a burning altar, the flames of which beat down upon us.

"I do not know," he continued, "if the Figure evoked followed me invisibly, but no sooner had my head touched the pillow in my own chamber than I saw once more that grand Shade of Catherine rise before me. I felt myself, instinctively, in a luminous sphere, and my eyes, fastened upon the queen with intolerable fixity, saw naught but her. Suddenly, she bent toward me."

At these words the ladies present made a unanimous movement of curiosity.

"But," continued the lawyer, "I am not sure that I ought to relate what happened, for though I am inclined to believe it was all a dream, it concerns grave matters.

"Of religion?" asked Beaumarchais.

"If there is any impropriety," remarked Calonne, "these ladies will excuse it."

"It relates to government," replied the lawyer.

"Go on, then," said the minister; "Voltaire, Diderot, and their fellows have already begun to tutor us on that subject."

Calonne became very attentive, and his neighbor, Madame de Genlis, rather anxious. The little provincial still hesitated, and Beaumarchais said to him somewhat roughly:—

"Go on, *maître*, go on! Don't you know that when the laws allow but little liberty the people seek their freedom in their morals?"

Thus adjured, the small man told his tale:—

"Whether it was that certain ideas were fermenting in my brain, or that some strange power impelled me, I said to her: 'Ah! madame, you committed a very great crime.' 'What crime?' she asked in a grave voice. 'The crime for which the signal was given from the clock of the palace on the 24th of August,' I answered. She smiled disdainfully, and a few deep wrinkles appeared on her pallid cheeks. 'You call that a crime which was only a misfortune,' she said. 'The enterprise, being ill-managed, failed; the benefit we expected for France, for Europe, for the Catholic Church was lost. Impossible to foresee that. Our orders were ill executed; we did not find as many Montlucs as we needed. Posterity will not hold us responsible for the failure of communications, which deprived our work of the unity of movement which is essential to all great strokes of policy; that was our

misfortune ! If on the 25th of August not the shadow of a Huguenot had been left in France, I should go down to the uttermost posterity as a noble image of Providence. How many, many times have the clear-sighted souls of Sixtus the Fifth, Richelieu, Bossuet, reproached me secretly for having failed in that enterprise after having the boldness to conceive it ! How many and deep regrets for that failure attended my deathbed ! Thirty years after the Saint-Bartholomew the evil it might have cured was still in existence. That failure caused ten times more blood to flow in France than if the massacre of August 24th had been completed on the 26th. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in honor of which you have struck medals, has cost more tears, more blood, more money, and killed the prosperity of France far more than three Saint-Bartholomews. Letellier with his pen gave effect to a decree which the throne had secretly promulgated since my time ; but, though the vast execution was necessary of the 25th of August, 1572, on the 25th of August, 1685, it was useless. Under the second son of Henri de Valois heresy had scarcely conceived an offspring ; under the second son of Henri de Bourbon that teeming mother had cast her spawn over the whole universe. You accuse me of a crime, and you put up statues to the son of Anne of Austria ! Nevertheless, he and I attempted the same thing ; he succeeded, I failed ; but Louis XIV. found the Protestants without arms, whereas in my reign they had powerful armies, statesmen, warriors, and all Germany on their side.' At these words, slowly uttered, I felt an inward shudder pass through me. I fancied I breathed the fumes of

blood from I know not what great mass of victims. Catherine was magnified. She stood before me like an evil genius ; she sought, it seemed to me, to enter my consciousness and abide there."

"He dreamed all that," whispered Beaumarchais ; "he certainly never invented it."

"'My reason is bewildered,' I said to the queen. 'You praise yourself for an act which three generations of men have condemned, stigmatized, and —' 'Add,' she rejoined, 'that historians have been more unjust toward me than my contemporaries. None have defended me. I, rich and all-powerful, am accused of ambition ! I am taxed with cruelty, — I who have but two deaths upon my conscience. Even to impartial minds I am still a problem. Do you believe that I was actuated by hatred, that vengeance and fury were the breath of my nostrils ?' She smiled with pity. 'No,' she continued, 'I was cold and calm as reason itself. I condemned the Huguenots without pity, but without passion ; they were the rotten fruit in my basket and I cast them out. Had I been Queen of England, I should have treated seditious Catholics in the same way. The life of our power in those days depended on there being but one God, one Faith, one Master in the State. Happily for me, I uttered my justification in one sentence which history is transmitting. When Birago falsely announced to me the loss of the battle of Dreux, I answered ; 'Well then ; we will go to the Protestant churches.' Did I hate the Reformers ? No, I esteemed them much, and I knew them little. If I felt any aversion to the politicians of my time, it was to that base Cardinal de Lorraine, and to his brother the shrewd

and brutal soldier who spied upon my every act. They were the real enemies of my children; they sought to snatch the crown; I saw them daily at work and they wore me out. If *we* had not ordered the Saint-Bartholomew, the Guises would have done the same thing by the help of Rome and the monks. The League, which was powerful only in consequence of my old age, would have begun in 1573.' 'But, madame, instead of ordering that horrible murder (pardon my plainness) why not have employed the vast resources of your political power in giving to the Reformers those wise institutions which made the reign of Henri IV. so glorious and so peaceful?' She smiled again and shrugged her shoulders, the hollow wrinkles of her pallid face giving her an expression of the bitterest sarcasm. 'The peoples,' she said, 'need periods of rest after savage feuds; there lies the secret of that reign. But Henri IV. committed two irreparable blunders. He ought neither to have abjured Protestantism, nor, after becoming a Catholic himself, should he have left France Catholic. He, alone, was in a position to have changed the whole face of France without a jar. Either not a stole, or not a conventicle — that should have been his motto. To leave two bitter enemies, two antagonistic principles in a government with nothing to balance them, that is the crime of kings; it is thus that they sow revolutions. To God alone belongs the right to keep good and evil perpetually together in his work. But it may be,' she said reflectively, 'that that sentence was inscribed on the foundation of Henri IV.'s policy, and it may have caused his death. It is impossible that Sully did not cast covetous eyes on the vast wealth of

the clergy, — which the clergy did not possess in peace, for the nobles robbed them of at least two-thirds of their revenue. Sully, the Reformer, himself owned abbeys.' She paused, and appeared to reflect. 'But,' she resumed, 'remember you are asking the niece of a pope to justify her Catholicism.' She stopped again. 'And yet, after all,' she added with a gesture of some levity, 'I should have made a good Calvinist! Do the wise men of your century still think that religion had anything to do with that struggle, the greatest which Europe has ever seen? — a vast revolution, retarded by little causes which, however, will not be prevented from overwhelming the world because I failed to smother it; a revolution,' she said, giving me a solemn look, 'which is still advancing, and which you might consummate. Yes, *you*, who hear me!' I shuddered. 'What! has no one yet understood that the old interests and the new interests seized Rome and Luther as mere banners? What! do they not know that Louis IX., to escape just such a struggle, dragged a population a hundredfold more in number than I destroyed from their homes and left their bones on the sands of Egypt, for which he was made a saint? while I — But I,' she added, '*failed*.' She bowed her head and was silent for some moments. I no longer beheld a queen, but rather one of those ancient druidesses to whom human lives are sacrificed; who unroll the pages of the future and exhume the teachings of the past. But soon she uplifted her regal and majestic form. 'Luther and Calvin,' she said, 'by calling the attention of the burghers to the abuses of the Roman Church, gave birth in Europe to a spirit of investigation which was certain to lead the peoples to

examine all things. Examination leads to doubt. Instead of faith, which is necessary to all societies, those two men drew after them, in the far distance, a strange philosophy, armed with hammers, hungry for destruction. Science sprang, sparkling with her specious lights, from the bosom of heresy. It was far less a question of reforming a Church than of winning indefinite liberty for man — which is the death of power. I saw that. The consequence of the successes won by the religionists in their struggle against the priesthood (already better armed and more formidable than the Crown) was the destruction of the monarchical power raised by Louis XI. at such vast cost upon the ruins of feudality. It involved, in fact, nothing less than the annihilation of religion and royalty, on the ruins of which the whole burgher class of Europe meant to stand. The struggle was therefore war without quarter between the new ideas and the law, — that is, the old beliefs. The Catholics were the emblem of the material interests of royalty, of the great lords, and of the clergy. It was a duel to the death between two giants; unfortunately, the Saint-Bartholomew proved to be only a wound. Remember this: because a few drops of blood were spared at that opportune moment, torrents were compelled to flow at a later period. The intellect which soars above a nation cannot escape a great misfortune; I mean the misfortune of finding no equals capable of judging it when it succumbs beneath the weight of untoward events. My equals are few; fools are in the majority: that statement explains all. If my name is execrated in France, the fault lies with the commonplace minds who form the mass of all generations. In the great crises through

which I passed, the duty of reigning was not the mere giving of audiences, reviewing of troops, signing of decrees. I may have committed mistakes, for I was but a woman. But why was there then no man who rose above his age? The Duke of Alba had a soul of iron; Philip II. was stupefied by Catholic belief; Henri IV. was a gambling soldier and a libertine; the Admiral, a stubborn mule. Louis XI. lived too soon, Richelieu too late. Virtuous or criminal, guilty or not in the Saint-Bartholomew, I accept the onus of it; I stand between those two great men, — the visible link of an unseen chain. The day will come when some paradoxical writer will ask if the peoples have not bestowed the title of executioner upon their victims. It will not be the first time that humanity has preferred to immolate a god rather than admit its own guilt. You are shedding upon two hundred clowns, sacrificed for a purpose, the tears you refuse to a generation, a century, a world! You forget that political liberty, the tranquillity of a nation, nay, knowledge itself, are gifts on which destiny has laid a tax of blood!’ ‘But,’ I exclaimed, with tears in my eyes, ‘will the nations never be happy at less cost?’ ‘Truth never leaves her well but to bathe in the blood which refreshes her,’ she replied. ‘Christianity, itself the essence of all truth, since it comes from God, was fed by the blood of martyrs, which flowed in torrents; and shall it not ever flow? You will learn this, you who are destined to be one of the builders of the social edifice founded by the Apostles. So long as you level heads you will be applauded, but take your trowel in hand, begin to reconstruct, and your fellows will kill you.’ Blood! blood!

the word sounded in my ears like a knell. 'According to you,' I cried, 'Protestantism has the right to reason as you do!' But Catherine had disappeared, as if some puff of air had suddenly extinguished the supernatural light which enabled my mind to see that Figure whose proportions had gradually become gigantic. And then, without warning, I found within me a portion of myself which adopted the monstrous doctrine delivered by the Italian. I woke, weeping, bathed in sweat, at the moment when my reason told me firmly, in a gentle voice, that neither kings nor nations had the right to apply such principles, fit only for a world of atheists."

"How would you save a falling monarchy?" asked Beaumarchais.

"God is present," replied the little lawyer.

"Therefore," remarked Monsieur de Calonne, with the inconceivable levity which characterized him, "we have the agreeable resource of believing ourselves the instruments of God, according to the Gospel of Bossuet."

As soon as the ladies discovered that the tale related only to a conversation between the queen and the lawyer, they had begun to whisper and to show signs of impatience, — interjecting, now and then, little phrases through his speech. 'How wearisome he is!' 'My dear, when will he finish?' were among those which reached my ear.

When the strange little man had ceased speaking the ladies too were silent; Monsieur Bodard was sound asleep; the surgeon, half drunk; Monsieur de Calonne was smiling at the lady next him. Lavoisier, Beaumarchais, and I alone had listened to the lawyer's

dream. The silence at this moment had something solemn about it. The gleam of the candles seemed to me magical. A sentiment bound all three of us by some mysterious tie to that singular little man, who made me, strange to say, conceive, suddenly, the inexplicable influences of fanaticism. Nothing less than the hollow, cavernous voice of Beaumarchais's neighbor, the surgeon, could, I think, have roused me.

"I, too, have dreamed," he said.

I looked at him more attentively, and a feeling of some strange horror came over me. His livid skin, his features, huge and yet ignoble, gave an exact idea of what you must allow me to call the *scum* of the earth. A few bluish-black spots were scattered over his face, like bits of mud, and his eyes shot forth an evil gleam. The face seemed, perhaps, darker, more lowering than it was, because of the white hair piled like hoarfrost on his head.

"That man must have buried many a patient," I whispered to my neighbor the lawyer.

"I would n't trust him with my dog," he answered.

"I hate him involuntarily."

"For my part, I despise him."

"Perhaps we are unjust," I remarked.

"Ha! to-morrow he may be as famous as Volange the actor."

Monsieur de Calonne here motioned us to look at the surgeon, with a gesture that seemed to say: "I think he'll be very amusing."

"Did you dream of a queen?" asked Beaumarchais.

"No, I dreamed of a People," replied the surgeon, with an emphasis which made us laugh. "I was then

in charge of a patient whose leg I was to amputate the next day — ”

“ Did you find the People in the leg of your patient ? ” asked Monsieur de Calonne.

“ Precisely,” replied the surgeon.

“ How amusing ! ” cried Madame de Genlis.

“ I was somewhat surprised,” went on the speaker, without noticing the interruption, and sticking his hands into the gussets of his breeches, “ to hear something talking to me within that leg. I then found I had the singular faculty of entering the being of my patient. Once within his skin I saw a marvellous number of little creatures which moved, and thought, and reasoned. Some of them lived in the body of the man, others lived in his mind. His ideas were beings which were born, and grew, and died ; they were sick and well, and gay, and sad ; they all had special countenances ; they fought with each other, or they embraced each other. Some ideas sprang forth and went to live in the world of intellect. I began to see that there were two worlds, two universes, — the visible universe, and the invisible universe ; that the earth had, like man, a body and a soul. Nature illumined herself for me ; I felt her immensity when I saw the oceans of beings who, in masses and in species, spread everywhere, making one sole and uniform animated Matter, from the stone of the earth to God. Magnificent vision ! In short, I found a universe within my patient. When I inserted my knife into his gangrened leg I cut into a million of those little beings. Oh ! you laugh, madame ; let me tell you that you are eaten up by such creatures — ”

"No personalities!" interposed Monsieur de Calonne.
"Speak for yourself and for your patient."

"My patient, frightened by the cries of his animalcules, wanted to stop the operation; but I went on regardless of his remonstrances; telling him that those evil animals were already gnawing at his bones. He made a sudden movement of resistance, not understanding that what I did was for his good, and my knife slipped aside, entered my own body, and —"

"He is stupid," said Lavoisier.

"No, he is drunk," replied Beaumarchais.

"But, gentlemen, my dream has a meaning," cried the surgeon.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Bodard, waking up; "my leg is asleep!"

"Your animalcules must be dead," said his wife.

"That man has a vocation," announced my little neighbor, who had stared imperturbably at the surgeon while he was speaking.

"It is to yours," said the ugly man, "what the action is to the word, the body to the soul."

But his tongue grew thick, his words were indistinct, and he said no more. Fortunately for us the conversation took another turn. At the end of half an hour we had forgotten the surgeon of the king's pages, who was fast asleep. Rain was falling in torrents as we left the supper-table.

"The lawyer is no fool," I said to Beaumarchais.

"True, but he is cold and dull. You see, however, that the provinces are still sending us worthy men who take a serious view of political theories and the history of France. It is a leaven which will rise."

“Is your carriage here?” asked Madame de Saint-James, addressing me.

“No,” I replied, “I did not think that I should need it to-night.”

Madame de Saint-James then rang the bell, ordered her own carriage to be brought round, and said to the little lawyer in a low voice:—

“Monsieur de Robespierre, will you do me the kindness to drop Monsieur Marat at his own door?—for he is not in a state to go alone.”

“With pleasure, madame,” replied Monsieur de Robespierre, with his finical gallantry. “I only wish you had requested me to do something more difficult.”

THE END.

THE COMEDY OF HUMAN LIFE

By H. DE BALZAC

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

LOUIS LAMBERT

FACINO CANE

GAMBARA

MELMOTH ABSOLVED



George

printed and by Robert B. B.

Printed by

Madame de Staël.

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INTRODUCTION.

“LOUIS LAMBERT” was written at the Château of Saché, near Tours, in 1832. Balzac labored hard upon it, and in his letters to his sister, Madame Laure Surville, he repeatedly alludes to the trouble it occasioned him. In one of these letters he says: “‘Louis Lambert’ has cost me such labors! I have been obliged to read so many books to write this one. Some day perhaps it will direct science into new channels. If I had made of it a purely scientific work it would have attracted the attention of thinkers, who now will not cast their eyes over it. But if chance some day puts ‘Louis Lambert’ in their hands, perhaps they will speak of it.” And again he frankly records his opinion, “I believe that ‘Louis Lambert’ is a fine book.” In what follows it is possible to discover Balzac’s answer to some sisterly expression of disapproval, derived from a suspicion that in describing the sad end of Louis Lambert the author was influenced by personal forebodings. “Why,” he says, “harp upon the termination? You know why I chose that ending. You are always afraid. That conclusion accords with probability, and but too many sad examples justify it. Has

not the doctor said that madness is always at the door of great intellects which are overworked?" Madame Surville cites this letter in her memoir of her brother, but offers no explanation of the allusions it contains. She does indeed observe that "In 'Louis Lambert,' my brother, in order to obtain a hearing for certain ideas which were not yet accepted by the world, believed it necessary to put them forward under the safeguard of (simulated) insanity." The good lady did not herself understand the philosophy of "Louis Lambert," though she entertained the profoundest respect for it; and she *naïvely* reveals her preference for less exalted and difficult subjects in observing, as with a sigh of relief, after speaking of Louis's speculations, "But let us return to the realities of life," — and thereupon quoting with pride one of Balzac's political predictions.

When "Louis Lambert" was first published it was received by the critics generally far more appreciatively than could have been expected. Indeed it is nothing less than surprising that such a book should have been read at all at that time, and especially remarkable that the really interesting points in it should then have been even dimly perceived. Sainte-Beuve, the dry light of whose intellect had no affinities with psychical theories of any kind, sneered at Balzac's mysticism and condemned his philosophy as altogether too heterodox to deserve serious consideration. It was not possible for Sainte-Beuve to comprehend Balzac, however, even had he been willing to make the attempt, and it would have been perfectly natural in the circumstances had "Louis

Lambert" been rejected by the French critics generally, as dull, stupid, or extravagant. Owing possibly to the force of the conviction that Balzac was not altogether as other men, and in part to the reputation which he had already established, the verdict of literary circles was favorable, and the book obtained a considerable circulation, though it never could have interested the general reader as the same author's social studies did.

To understand "Louis Lambert" thoroughly it is necessary to bear in mind its relation to the scheme of the "Comédie Humaine," regarded as a synchronous work. Taine, though fundamentally as materialist as Sainte-Beuve, has concluded a by no means adequate or sympathetic critique of Balzac's philosophical studies with an observation which is not less shrewd than apposite. He says that those who object to "Louis Lambert" and "Seraphita" "ought to perceive that these works crown an enterprise as a flower crowns a plant; that in them the author's genius finds its complete expression and final bloom; that his other books prepare for, explain, presuppose, and justify them." This is true. Balzac undertook to describe the society of his time from centre to circumference, from bottom to top. His vast plan involved the photographing, the analysis, the classification, of every social element. He aimed at recording the complex interplay of emotions, passions, master motives, conflicting interests, as set forth in the life of all kinds and conditions of men. To have excluded from such a plan the abnormalities of modern society would have been to admit an unwar-

rantable limitation to the work. In exhibiting the debasing effects of sordid selfishness, Balzac hesitated at no inquiry. He was equally bound by the law of his own genius to carry the inquest upward, and to show the results of excessive cerebral activity upon a physical constitution too feeble to withstand the pressure of thought.

In "Louis Lambert" we have this peculiar study, and the interest of it is deepened by the knowledge that much autobiographical matter enters into the book. The episode of the confiscation of the "Treatise on the Will" by a narrow-minded professor at the College of Vendôme is taken directly from Balzac's own experience. He was the author of the treatise, and he no doubt describes his own sufferings and predilections in recounting the trials and punishments of "The Poet and Pythagoras." The frail physique given to Louis, though evidently from the beginning a fatal hindrance to the full development of that rare and delicate spirit, was indispensable to the accomplishment of the literary purpose involved. The union of beneficent intelligence with physical robustness is exhibited in M. Benassis ("The Country Doctor"). The wreck of strong intellect through the pursuit of a fallacy is shown in Balthazar Claes ("The Alkahest"). "Louis Lambert" is intended to display the working of a pure and powerful mind in a body at once too weak to pull the spirit down to earthly pursuits, and incapable of sustaining the drafts made by the brain upon the general vitality. Under these conditions that happens which might be expected. The youth passes the thin

partition which divides the bounds between genius and madness. Yet it is to be observed that Balzac maintains a certain reserve on the point of Louis's madness. The biographer, who visits him when he is under the care of the devoted Pauline, does not feel altogether certain that his friend is truly insane. He even asks himself whether the condition of chronic ecstasy in which the patient seems withdrawn may not be the consequence of an illumination so much higher than that vouchsafed mankind at large as to transcend expression, — to separate the recipient from intellectual contact with his fellows by revealing to his inner sense untranslatable things. Pauline herself refuses to the last to admit the madness of her lover. In these two circumstances there is a distinct if not an obvious meaning. In writing "Louis Lambert" Balzac had a dual purpose. The first has been outlined already. The second was the embodiment in this book of certain views and speculations which were the result of wide reading in little explored fields, combined with the expression of that philosophy of life which belonged to the character of his own genius. Taine perceived this, though he was far from grasping the full significance of the facts. Balzac, observes this writer, was no sceptic, either by nature or profession. "His nature and his calling compelled him to imagine and to believe; for the observation of the novelist is nothing but divination. He did not perceive sentiments as the anatomist perceives fibres; he divined them from the gesture, the physiognomy, the habits, the abode, — and so rapidly that he seemed to grasp them, and was

unable to distinguish direct and certain knowledge from this indirect and dubious knowledge. His instrument was Intuition, that dangerous and superior faculty by which man imagines or discovers in an isolated fact all the possibilities of which it is capable ; a kind of second-sight proper to prophets and somnambules, who sometimes find the true, who often find the false, and who commonly attain only verisimilitude. Balzac employed it in the sciences," — which M. Taine of course thinks deplorable. To the readers of this translation, however, the peculiarity which M. Taine regards as unscientific and disastrous to the value and usefulness of Balzac's speculations may perhaps prove an additional source of interest, if only because few things can be more deserving of careful study than the efforts of great men to deduce from observation of their own intelligence answers to those deep problems which have up to the present time baffled Science and Philosophy equally. As preliminary to a candid examination of these views, moreover, it is well to recall a fact usually overlooked, namely, that when objections are raised against what are called unverifiable assumptions, such objections apply not only to the intuitional methods of research, but to many of the fundamental concepts of physical science. In fact we should have no coherent cosmology were the use of the scientific imagination excluded. Every theory of the universe advanced by science demands the acceptance of postulates which are in most instances figments of the imagination, and some of which go counter to one of the primal laws of all scientific research, in positing

conditions wholly foreign to experience. Of such is the atomic theory, which assumes the existence, as the base of matter, of a body possessing properties the like of which no body known to human percipience is endowed with. Thus the atom of science is absolutely solid and absolutely impenetrable, yet so far as is known there are no absolutely solid and absolutely impenetrable bodies in nature. The theory of atomic vibrations is another case in point, involving as it does conceptions as to the rapidity of motion and frequency of contact between molecules (each molecule containing at least two atoms) which are literally unthinkable. We are asked to realize, for example, that a hydrogen molecule collides with its fellows some seventeen thousand million times every second, while the collisions of an oxygen molecule are seven thousand million per second. The habit of accepting whatever comes to us with the endorsement of Science causes men to think they comprehend such statements, whereas in truth no story of a miracle can possibly be harder to grasp by the reason alone. Science not only employs the imagination freely, but requires from its votaries a constant exercise of faith. So questionable, also, are many of the assumptions upon which elaborate physical theories have been erected, that in a sharp and strongly-sustained critique of "*The Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics*," Judge J. B. Stallo not long since held himself justified in charging Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Tait, Stewart, Maxwell, and other representative men of science, with clinging to fallacies and fancies whose

origin was to be traced to the metaphysics of the Schoolmen.

Nor must it be forgotten that in some important directions the possibilities of physical research are bounded in such a manner that it is idle to expect much further advance. When investigation is stopped, not by the imperfection of the mechanical instruments employed, but by the imperfections of the human organs, on the one hand, and those of the natural forces or agencies under examination, on the other, it is clear that little hope of overcoming these obstacles can be entertained. Now this limit has already been reached in the study of Light. We know that the oscillations which produce upon our vision the effect of the violet ray in the spectrum are the swiftest of all, the wave-motion being estimated at 699,000,000,000,000 per second. Beyond the violet ray all is dark to us, — but not because it really *is* dark ; the reason it appears dark is that at this point our eyes become incapable of apprehending the velocity of the oscillations. If our vision were stronger we could discern other rays beyond the violet. In fact, we can make instruments capable of better work than the imperfection of the natural forces renders it possible to accomplish. The microscope has been carried to such a pitch of perfection that it could investigate things now beyond the reach of science, were it not that the light is too “coarse” as microscopists phrase it, and human eyes are too dull. The light itself in these cases becomes a hindrance to clear vision. Nor is it only the dulness of our sight which obstructs research and limits knowledge. There

are sounds so shrill that the tympanum cannot register them. The sound-waves, like the light-waves, move too rapidly to be caught. There are many persons who cannot hear the piercing chirp of the cricket. To them this high note is complete silence.

Thus the progress of science should not be conceived as from certainty to certainty, but rather from complete ignorance to conjecture, and thence to relative and often dubious knowledge. In physics, however, one fact deserves to be noted with emphasis. Modern research tends more and more toward the conclusion that the universe is composed of a single substance. The unity of nature has been rendered more probable by every important physical discovery made during the past century. It is a theory which cannot indeed be claimed by any modern. To these we owe the mechanical doctrine of heat, that of the conservation of energy, the kinetic theory of gases, and other discoveries which afford strong support to the later cosmical scheme. But the vortical theory of the universe may be traced back at least five centuries before the Christian era, to Anaximander, and strong claims are made for even an earlier and perhaps an Aryan origin for the doctrine. We shall see, when we come to examine Balzac's speculations, the curiously close relation between the latest conclusions of modern science and the central concepts of a philosophy which has much in common with those archaic and mystical views, the study of which commends itself more and more to a generation educated to resent and suspect dogmatism wherever encountered, and equally

disinclined to accept imposed authority the credentials of which are not beyond doubt. The relativity of all knowledge having been taught to some purpose, and the Western mind having been opened to the study of those Oriental philosophies and psychologies, which challenge interest by the very strangeness of their processes and points of view, it has become possible to deal seriously with that introspective analysis, which for so long and barren a period was condemned as delusive and unprofitable, chiefly because the cultivation of psychic faculties was unknown in the Western world, though the work done by those faculties was recognized and admired in a blind and unintelligent fashion.

We see in M. Taine's characterization of Intuition as a "superior but dangerous faculty" a distinct echo of the intellectual stage referred to. The superiority of Intuition as shown in its instantaneous cognition of truths which the reason can arrive at only by lengthened and circuitous processes, M. Taine clearly considers incontestable. That he should think the faculty dangerous — that is to say, liable to mislead those who possess it — must be attributed to his own fallacious dependence upon a rational infallibility which has no existence. The truth is that the moment we enter upon an examination of the various agencies of knowledge at the disposal of humanity we discover that in the first place no criterion of truth is attainable; and in the second place, that the mental processes which can be traced throughout are not demonstrably more trustworthy or accurate than those conclusions which seem

to follow upon no premises, but rather to be projected into the mind from without. To these latter thoughts the names Inspiration and Intuition have been given. Curiously enough, a degree of confidence has usually been accorded the issues grouped under the first name, superior to that allowed the products classified as intuitional; though the mode of reception and the absence of definite knowledge concerning the source are the same in both cases, and the processes are in fact identical. In "Louis Lambert," however, we are to deal with more than Intuition. It is not to be supposed that Balzac originated the scheme of thought here unfolded. He had assimilated a mass of occult and mystical doctrine. He had mastered the little that was then known to the West of the philosophy and psychology of India. He had absorbed Swedenborg and Jacob Boehme and Saint Martin. He had studied Plotinus and Paracelsus, Raymond Lully, Picus de Mirandola, Cornelius Agrippa, John Reuchlin. He was familiar with the great work ascribed to the Rabbi Simon Ben Jochai. The philosophy of Hermes Trismegistus was not unknown to him, and he had experimented personally in mesmerism. It was natural, it was even inevitable, that the literature of mysticism should appeal powerfully to him, for he lived in a world which was far more spiritual than material; and moreover the reality, the objectivity, of his spiritual conceptions was so complete that his work more resembled that of an art-student drawing from life, or that of a reporter taking notes in a crowd, than the commonly

received impression of an author laboriously building up visions which he then proceeds to describe. To him the creations of his thought were as genuine entities as the men and women he saw about him ; and being thus gifted with abnormal power of vivifying his ideas, it was a necessary consequence that he should regard Thought as a great natural force. Not that the experience of Balzac in this regard is to be considered as extraordinary, save in degree. Imagination — the faculty whereby we *image* things — is common to all, and the reality of its processes is attested by universal experience. To the majority this faculty brings only imperfect, blurred, and feeble pictures. To the poet, to the great author, to the great musician, it opens new worlds. In their minds the philosophic distinction between subjectivity and objectivity often disappears. The creations of their thoughts are at least as real as material things. In Balzac's case they were sometimes more real. It might be surmised by a bold thinker that such minds as the great novelist's are symbols of that ultimate unity of nature which appeared to this one so natural and obvious a truth ; that in the facility of transformation from subject to object, and in the intense vitalizing force of such mentalities, was shown forth palpably an illustration of the oneness of that primal substance modifications of which include the so-called immaterialities, as well as the materialities, of the universe ; which, while varying in apparent properties and phenomenal appearances as widely as the hydrogen molecule on the one hand, and the lovely form of a beautiful woman on the other, — as

diverse as the tenuous gas of a comet's tail and the ponderous massiveness of a modern ironclad, — are all resolvable into the same ethereal substance whence in the beginning the germs of everything proceeded.

Louis Lambert, Balzac tells us, was normally a spiritualist, — that is, as contra-distinguished from a materialist. But with much subtlety he is represented as being drawn in the direction of materialism by his reason. When he depends wholly upon ratiocination he loses his hold on the spiritual. When he yields to intuition he is almost wholly spiritualist. “Perhaps,” observes the “Poet,” “the words ‘materialism’ and ‘spiritualism’ indicate two sides of one and the same fact.” That, we may safely conclude, was the view toward which Balzac was most strongly drawn, and that, it is worth while to add, is the conclusion to which all modern physical research also tends more and more strongly. According to the septenary analysis of the human constitution to be found in Oriental creeds, there are three perishable principles which tend downward, three imperishable principles which tend upward, and one (the fourth) which forms the joining-point of the others, and itself may be deflected either up or down. Such a conception would elucidate the apparent constitutional inability of a large proportion of mankind to apprehend spiritual views of things, and the corresponding incapacity of a much smaller proportion to appreciate material views of things. A tendency early established, and which inclined the mind upward or downward, would account for a difference which in its essence may be as

simply derived as this, yet momentous in its ultimate effects.

Balzac employs the doctrine of Swedenborg to illustrate this line of speculation. Every man, according to the Swedish seer, possesses in himself angelic potentialities. To fulfil his celestial vocation he must cultivate the spiritual elements. If material tendencies prevail in him, the forces of his nature are expended in the action of the physical faculties, and the angelic part of him perishes slowly through the process of materialization. In the contrary case, — if, that is, he nourishes and sustains his interior life, — the soul expands, and obtains ascendancy over the body, and at death, the spirit, prepared and fitted for the higher life, assumes its new functions easily and promptly. This doctrine was peculiarly suited to the mind of Louis Lambert, and he is represented as longing to accept it; but in analyzing his own mental processes, he is much struck by a dream or vision, in which he saw clearly a landscape he had not at the time visited in his waking state, and which he instantly recognizes when subsequently taken to the spot. The subtlety of his reflections is strikingly illustrated in the ideas to which this incident gives rise. At first he is disposed to regard it as proving what occultists term the possibility of the projection of the astral form, — the existence of some second ego capable of leaving the body, going abroad, and taking cognizance of mundane things. But presently it occurs to him that there may be another explanation of the phenomenon, — that it may only indicate the possession

of latent faculties common to all, and which can be accounted for materially. There is some crudeness and not a little obvious fallacy in the earlier speculations of Lambert, but it is quite clear that they were put there intentionally and not ignorantly by Balzac. His object was to trace the development of an exceptionally powerful mind, and he takes various and almost always skilful methods of showing the growth of this interesting intellectuality. The extreme sensibility of Louis, and the energy of his imagination are, for instance, exhibited in his remark: "If I think strongly on the sensation the blade of my penknife would cause if thrust into my flesh, I instantly experience a sharp pain, as though I had really cut myself; nothing is lacking but the flow of blood. But this feeling takes me by surprise, like a sudden noise breaking into a deep silence. An idea causing physical suffering! What do you think of that?" In this brief sentence is opened up one of the most interesting and suggestive of studies; namely, that of the influence of the mind upon the body. The staple English treatise upon it is that of Dr. Daniel Hack Tuke, who has treated it with breadth of view and a wealth of illustration. Those who are familiar with his work are aware that the example cited by Louis Lambert, though impressive, is in no respect extravagant or fanciful, — far more surprising cases of the influence of mind upon body being recorded. Thus Dr. Tuke observes that "The emotions powerfully excite, modify, or suspend organic functions, causing changes in nutrition, secretion, and excretion, and

thereby affecting the development and maintenance of the body." And he goes on to detail cases which prove that there is absolutely no kind of change which may not be caused in every part of the body save in the bony framework, by the emotions or the will. Indeed, Lambert's assertion, "Facts are nothing; they do not exist; there subsists nothing but ideas," appears anything but far-fetched, when the capacities of the intangible something called Mind for influencing matter are considered; though the study of this branch of science cannot but tend to strengthen the growing doctrine of the unity of nature. Perhaps the most curious fact in this line of research is the power of simple belief, whether right or wrong, to effect structural changes and important modifications of tissue. The late Dr. W. B. Carpenter brought together a large number of instances of this, in his treatise on "*Mental Physiology*." History, indeed, abounds with the most diverse illustrations of this familiar, yet little understood, class of phenomena, and there are well-attested cases which demonstrate that even death may be caused by a persistent mental impression. Belief that a disease has been contracted will often produce the disease or a simulation of it, just as a belief in the potency of a therapeutic agent will produce all the beneficial effects the agent could have caused, even when some neutral substitute, such as bread pills, is actually administered.

Louis Lambert perceived the implications of this mental influence over the body, and the effect of it may be traced in his later and riper conclusions. To

Balzac such perception was easy, but the world at large has for so long a time confused itself with nominal distinctions that it has ended by making of the terms "mind" and "matter" two irreconcilable and mutually destructive entities. One inevitable result of so regarding them is the blocking of all paths to complete elucidation. Philosophers have done for Mind and Matter very much what theologians have done for Nature and the Supernatural. In denying the existence of the latter, modern science is justified, for the word implies a contradiction. There can be nothing answering to the general conception of the supernatural. Whatever *is* is natural, and Supernaturalism, with all it implies and involves, is a delusion which has been handed down to us from the Dark Ages. In the endless wonders of the universe there is room for organic life under far more forms and conditions than the human mind is capable of conceiving. Science has discovered a few of these, and in time may extend its categories. It has given a lesson to the presumption which would set bounds to the power of the supreme Artificer, in demonstrating the habitation of air and water by swarming myriads of creatures every one of which is invisible to the naked eye and impalpable to the touch. It has shown that only parts of even the commonest manifestations of energy, as light, heat, or electricity, can be perceived by human vision or registered by human inventions. Of the material world beneath and around us we know that we are able to cognize but a small percentage of existing phenomena ;

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our senses will not serve us to see or hear or feel or taste the finer matters. A question of a few vibrations of the ether, more or less, makes for us all the difference between perception and non-perception. In the circumstances surely it is not less unscientific than irrational to attempt to draw the lines of sentient existence anywhere, or to draft creeds — whether scientific or theological — so narrow as to exclude from recognition whatever cannot be weighed or analyzed by the microscope or tested by the blowpipe or retort. Yet it must be admitted that the frame of mind here protested against is still far too common, and that whether inherited or acquired it is an intellectual condition which hinders progress, and above all which militates against advance on those psychological lines which to-day promise the most important results, and upon which Balzac, half a century ago, showed his ability to proceed with the luminous prescience of the true Seer.

Those who follow this path, however, must adapt themselves to the conditions of the quest. They must bear in mind the character of the psychology to be developed. The view taken by Balzac was that which great creative intellects have ever held and taught, — a doctrine venerable beyond all systems which obtain to-day, and comprehending the principles which are found at the base of all esoteric religions. Browning has put in the mouth of his Paracelsus a clear definition of one of these fundamental tenets : —

“ Truth is within ourselves ; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate’er you may believe ;
There is an inmost centre in us all,

Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception — which is truth;
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Blinds it, and makes all error; and, ‘*to know*
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.”

To “set free the soul in all alike,” to discover “the true laws by which the flesh bars in the spirit,” is the endeavor of the student of this psychology. The task undertaken by Balzac was far more comprehensive even than this. He might have said, in the words of the poet, *Aprile* :

“Each passion sprung from man, conceived by man,
Would I express and clothe in its right form,
Or blend with others struggling in one form,
Or show repressed by an ungainly form.
For, if you marvelled at some mighty spirit
With a fit frame to execute his will —
Ay, even unconsciously to work his will —
You should be moved no less beside some strong,
Rare spirit, fettered to a stubborn body,
Endeavoring to subdue it, and inform it
With its own splendor!”

This latter case may be likened to that of Louis Lambert, who is, however, still more clearly imaged forth in these lines : —

“One man shall crawl
Through life, surrounded by all stirring things,
Unmoved — and he goes mad; and from the wreck
Of what he was, by his wild talk alone,
You first collect how great a spirit he hid.”

It is not possible to classify Balzac's philosophy. The curious student will find it reminiscent of many systems of thought. From Plato to Proclus, from Proclus to Hegel, he ranged freely, and took whatever he could assimilate. As Hegel borrowed from Empedocles and Heraclitus, as the scepticism of Hume and the idealism of Spinoza overlap; so the thoughts of men upon the deep problems of existence mingle and flow from one to another. Any attempt to separate Balzac's ideas and to apportion them severally to their primal sources would be worse than unprofitable, it would be misleading. For just as Shakspeare took poor and witless tales and plays, and passing them through the alembic of his mind reproduced their contents transformed, glorified, impressed with the power and majesty of his intellect, so Balzac worked over and informed with the light of genius the confused mass of speculations absorbed by him in his reading. George Henry Lewes, who had a Positivist's contempt for all philosophies but his own, observes, in speaking of Hegel's method, "Curious to consider! In the modern as in the ancient world, the inevitable results of a philosophical Method are Idealism and Scepticism. One class of minds is led to Idealism or Mysticism; another class is led to Scepticism. But as both these conclusions are repugnant to the ordinary conclusions of mankind, they are rejected, and the Method which led to them is also rejected. A new one is found; hopes beat high; truth is about to be discovered; the search is active, and the result — always the same — repugnant

Idealism or Scepticism. Thus struggling and baffled, hoping and dispirited, has Humanity forever renewed the conflict, without once gaining a victory." Balzac was neither an Idealist, in the technical acceptance of the term, nor a Sceptic. His bent was necessarily idealistic, for the reason that in him Intuition was raised to a very high power, and since because of that endowment his objectification of subjects was remarkably complete. But, also because of the abnormal development of his imagination, that which to less gifted minds seemed mystical was to him matter-of-fact. This may be illustrated by reference to the peculiar conditions under which the so-called "Seeress of Prevorst" lived. She believed herself constantly surrounded by disembodied spirits, and so familiar were these apparitions to her that she took no more notice of them than of living persons. It is easy to perceive that in such a mental state no ideas of the supernatural could be disturbing, or other than familiar and perhaps even commonplace. There is indeed nothing, however strange or unaccustomed primarily, to which use will not familiarize the human mind. An exalted condition of actual idealism was normal with Balzac, and therefore it is that Taine found him, as he thought "a little coarse in imagination, and prone to clothe invisible things with bodies." Had Taine studied modern physics he would not have made this remark, nor would he have done so had he really comprehended the nature of the writer whose tendencies he was criticising at the time.

The development of the general system in "Louis Lambert" is gradual, and owing to the exigencies of the story there are some repetitions and contradictions. The main points are given clearly enough in the first of the two lists or categories which are represented as having been taken down by Pauline from the lips of Louis when the latter was supposed to be insane. The arrangement cannot be considered felicitous, and it is apt to bewilder the reader at first. In order to apprehend the doctrine fully, the condensed statements given in the numbered fragments should be studied carefully before following the more detailed reasoning by which, in the earlier period of college life, Louis endeavors to work out the ideas which occur to him. In these earlier discussions there is often a fulness and lucidity which leave nothing to be desired, and they are moreover very suggestive. But it is advisable that the two divisions, so to speak, be examined as nearly as possible together; for by adopting this course the later aphorisms will be found to throw new light upon the preceding and generally tentative suggestions, and *vice versa*. This method of taking the book is perhaps the only one which will enable the reader to obtain a thorough comprehension of the author's theories.

The first category opens with the following: "Here below everything is the product of an Ethereal Substance, which is the common base of divers phenomena known under the vulgar names of Electricity, Heat, Light, Galvanism, Magnetism, etc. The universality of the transmutations of this Substance constitutes what

is commonly termed Matter." When Balzac wrote this the doctrine of the Correlation of the Physical Forces had not been propounded. Since the appearance of Professor Grove's remarkable essay (1843) a strong and steadily extending current of thought has been flowing toward the conclusion that all matter is homogeneous. Thus Professor Winchell, in his "World-Life, or-Comparative Geology," observes: "But one system of matter pervades the immense spaces of the visible universe; and it is a dream of physical philosophy that all the recognized chemical elements will one day be found but modifications of a single material element. When this dream is realized we shall behold the amazing phenomenon of a universe, with its numberless forms, conditions, and aspects, built out of a single substance." The same author remarks that "the late remarkable experiments of Dr. Crooks on so-called 'radiant matter' would seem to be best understood on the hypothesis of the homogeneity of the elements of matter, and the continuity of the states of matter." But Biology furnishes abundant analogies and suggestions all pointing toward the same conclusion; and while the demonstration of this hypothesis could but deepen the mystery of existence, the experiences familiar to mankind should certainly cause the apprehended discovery to be regarded rather as natural than amazing. In the examination of germ-life, for example, the phenomena of individualization repel all conjecture and defeat all research. The identity of the chemical constituents of protoplasm may easily be established. The likeness between two eggs

of a common fowl may be shown to be complete; yet even in far simpler organisms the process of development introduces — how and why, we cannot discover — specific differences which impart to the completed organism individuality and character. Between the human ovum and that of lower animals no difference is perceptible. Is it more wonderful that everything should proceed from a single substance than that from the simplest combinations of matter structures so radically divergent should develop? As to Matter, discussions of which have loaded so many shelves and created so many controversies, we are not likely to know much more of it if we recognize it as the base of all phenomenal existence; nor can any school of philosophy derive real support from such a demonstration. The chief benefit to be anticipated from a determination of the problem is an economy of energy in scientific research. Already Heat and Light have been assigned their places. We indeed know them but partially, but we have more and more reason for believing that all the so-called Forces of Nature will eventually prove to be modes of Motion; and this is only another way of putting what Balzac describes as modifications of the primal substance. The relation of Balzac's physical theories to those of the Indian psychologists is also not a little interesting. We must not forget that the idea of a homogeneous medium is anything but a modern one, notwithstanding the fact that it has received from modern science its strongest confirmation. It was, however, taught by Anaxagoras, while the atomic theory, in

variously modified forms, was held by Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, and the Roman Lucretius. So, too, the vortical theory, which is of the essence of the modern nebular hypothesis, may be traced into the dim past of Chaldæa and Egypt, whence the Greek philosophers derived it. But the theory of a homogeneous substance is much older than Grecian civilization, — older than the science of the Chaldæan and Babylonian Magi. We must look for the genesis of that theory in the cradle of the Aryan race, and we shall find it established there in remote ages, — prior possibly to the Vedantic period. The homogeneous substance of the nineteenth century was known to the Aryan sages as *Akasa*, and they appear to have speculated upon it with an acumen and a thoroughness leaving little opportunity for the superposition of original views. At a considerably later period, yet still far in advance of all Western development, the “brooding East” formulated ideas regarding *Akasa* which, being taught only esoterically, escaped attention for a long time, but which indicate the attainment of conclusions as to the relations of the so-called Natural Forces with this supersensuous medium suggestive of much deeper and clearer knowledge of physics than modern science has hitherto been willing to admit the possibility of in what it regards as the childhood of the race. In fact the teachings of the Rishis concerning the Natural Forces may be said to suggest the broadest anticipations of the most advanced science in the present day in some particulars; and what is more, they seem to imply not only

a theoretical familiarity with the nature of the forces referred to, but a knowledge of methods of manipulating and controlling them such as the fertility of modern invention has thus far failed to equal.* As we proceed with the analysis of Balzac's physical theories we shall see that there are other elements in his system which are in singular accord with Oriental doctrines. This is not surprising when the processes by which ideas have been disseminated through the world are considered; but light has so often emanated from the East that the West has long ceased to give credit for its benefits.

That Balzac owed much to the Kabbalists is quite clear. They taught, however, that Matter, Heat, and Motion were closely inter-related; that Heat and Motion were in fact conditions of Matter. But then the Kabbalists held what modern Science cannot yet bring itself to; namely, that between Spirit and Matter there is no real barrier, — that Spirit informs all Matter, and that the biological phenomena which so perplex and baffle our clear-eyed students of Nature are explicable by the comparatively simple hypothesis of controlling Mind. They contended that dead Matter was unthinkable, — certainly altogether an unreasonable conception; and inorganic Nature did not strike them as confuting their doctrine. Of course the Kabbalists were unscientific, but so also is "Louis Lambert," and yet in both there is some matter for reflection; and here and there may be discerned so strange a foreshadowing of views and theories generally regarded as quite modern that it is not a little

interesting to observe the harmonies between conclusions reached by the most approved methods of inductive research, and those come at in an altogether irregular and illegitimate way, by putting confidence in the "superior but dangerous faculty of Intuition," as M. Taine has it, or by following the lead of Oriental mystics, occultists, and other heterodox inquirers.

It may appear at first not quite clear whether the "universal substance" postulated by Balzac corresponds more closely with the "substance" of Spinoza or with that of Berkeley. No philosopher has been more misrepresented than the latter, for he was charged with propounding self-evident absurdities when in fact he triumphed completely in his argument over both Realists and Dualists. He taught that there is only one substance, and that Spirit. This is the implication of the modern physical philosophy; for manifestly any rational conclusion upon the homogeneity of the primal substance must involve the spirituality of that substance, unless it is to be contended that life and thought are merely properties of matter; and even that contention cannot save Scepticism, for Matter which thinks is clearly not the matter of the Dualists at all. Balzac, however, has not left his opinion on this point doubtful. His second category clears up whatever may seem obscure in the first, and his definition of Will and Thought, together with his classification of human intelligence, prove the pervading spirituality of his scheme. As to the plausibility of this speculation, it is certainly much greater than that of the theories which require us to believe that Body or

Substance can affect Spirit. Of such a mode of action we have no experience; but on the other hand the analogies between spiritual action upon Matter and that of the so-called Natural Forces are so close and strong as to seem to point directly toward the Berkeleyan hypothesis. Take in illustration all forms of Energy. It is not a little significant that Energy is never found separate from Matter; so that, as Professor Stewart observes, "we might, with perfect propriety, define Matter as the seat or vehicle of Energy, — that which is essential to the existence of the known forms of Energy, without which therefore there could be no transformation of Energy, and therefore no physical life such as we know it." Matter and Energy together, then, furnish the bases of life. But what is Energy? It is a mode of Motion. It is the *vis viva*, the vivifying, transforming force upon the activity of which all the transmutations of matter depend. Upon the common and all-pervading substance Energy operates through the Natural Forces, and in no essentially different way from the operation of that highest element of man which we call Spirit, upon the body. Energy changes matter, fashions it, organizes it, builds it into myriad forms, and sustains in all organic Nature the condition we call Life. In like manner the human mind operates, and with certainly no stronger indications of knowledge implying a spiritual basis. This impalpable entity, this invisible essence, can by the direction of the Will, cause physical transformations equal in extent sometimes to those continuous miracles of germination and cell-growth our increasing knowledge of

which only renders the marvel and mystery of the processes greater.

When, then, we find Balzac suggesting that the human Will is a fluid (an awkward term, but intelligible enough) which is taken up by sentient creatures from the surrounding universal ethereal substance, and is transformed in the physical system into the form of the energy we know, and the capabilities of which are in evidence everywhere, we may not be prepared to accept the hypothesis, but we shall not be revolted by it as by a manifest absurdity. Observe that Balzac endows with Will every being capable of movement, and that he ascribes varieties of form and genera to combinations of this energizing force with the general Substance. There is here some obscurity; for while the operation of Will in the selection of specializations is not only entirely thinkable, but forms the basis of the teleological theory, the idea that the Will of the animal itself should be in any manner represented in the differentiation of forms and species is certainly not thinkable; since it is impossible to conceive of the existence of such individual Will *as* Will prior to the completion of the organism. But Balzac's remark concerning instincts, namely, that they result from the necessities imposed by the habitat of the animal, was a bold and far-seeing speculation, and considered as pre-Darwinian deserves some credit. The variation of species also is explained by the conditions of the environment.

In Man, proceeds Louis Lambert (or Balzac, for it is all the same) the Will becomes a characteristic force,

surpassing in energy that of all other animals. So much will be conceded at once, but the general apprehension of the extent to which the human Will can be developed is altogether inadequate. A modern mystical writer declares that "there is no force in the universe save Will-force; and all that life needs for life is possible to Will." To the uninstructed Western mind, such expressions are apt to appear wild and extravagant. It is only through the study of Oriental psychology that the truth and even the sobriety of them can be perceived. But, following Balzac's lines, let us assume the Will to be in its ultimate essence a Natural Force. Now we have advanced enough to know that some of the forces of nature can be controlled and made to work for man; and, moreover, one very subtle force, Electricity, has been so far mastered that it is possible to store it in accumulators, and to carry it about in this form, and to apply it whenever and wherever it is wanted. A couple of centuries ago, if some student in advance of his age had invented a vehicle resembling Faure's storage battery, no doubt he would have been charged with the practice of Black Magic, — as indeed nearly every man of science was, during the Middle Ages. To-day we learn of such discoveries quite coolly, and do not think of questioning their possibility; yet if it be said that the human Will is not less susceptible of accumulation than the much less subtle force called Electricity, the general tendency is toward incredulity. On the other hand there is a disposition — increasing of late years — to give the imagination too

free play when Oriental occultism is spoken of. It is to be feared that the principle *omne ignotum pro mirifico* is in operation here, and because most people really know very little about India, they may be prone to attribute to some of its residents powers and practices of a fabulous kind. Such as have studied the subject seriously shrink from countenancing any of these lawless imaginings, — being well aware that the only hope of bringing Western science to any interest in Eastern science lies in a restrained and cautious presentation of facts. The simple truth is that the men of science of India, having made an exhaustive study of the intellectual part of man — or, as some may prefer to term it, the spiritual part — profess to have gained an insight into the operations of the Will which enables them to control, regulate, discipline, and educate that faculty; and in demonstration of this power many of them have on various occasions given proof of the possession of some form of controllable energy, capable of producing phenomena in many respects analogous to those which are caused by what are termed the Natural Forces. In the West no less than in the East cultivation of the Will proceeds continually, but owing to the fact that with us purely material and in no sense scientific ends are sought by such education, the effects pass unnoted, or are ascribed to the wrong agencies. Psychology has always been the weakest branch of Western science, and remains so to this day. Since it has been approached from the side of physiology some apparent progress has been made, though

no crucial problem has been solved; and the present strongly material bias of the majority of men of science threatens to oppose an insuperable barrier to research. While such works as Dr. Maudsley's on "Body and Will" are possible, moreover, mental pathology will be studied to no adequate purpose; for the defect of an influence which leads men to look for confirmation of materialist theories instead of seeking the truth alone, regardless of consequences, must be fatal to fruitful investigation. Philosophers have often incurred the ridicule of the crowd by denying (metaphysically) the possibility of phenomena which, nevertheless, occur continually. Thus the impossibility of ideas without objects corresponding to them was maintained in face of the common experience that in dreams and in delirium ideas unquestionably do arise without the concurrence of any corresponding objects. But the perversity of philosophers even at the worst is mild and measured when compared with that scientific arrogance and fatuity which, rather than admit the least damaging inferences against favorite though undemonstrable hypotheses, resort to denial of facts the reality of which is as fully attested as anything can possibly be.

The examples of disciplined Will-force to be found in the Western world must be sought in the most active pursuits of men, as a rule. It is in commerce, banking, transportation, stock speculation, and similar occupations, that such illustrations are found. The Rebellion furnished some striking examples, however, and the case of Stonewall Jackson on one side, and General

Grant on the other, may be specially noted. Grant possessed what is called "an iron will." A more self-contained, determined man is rarely encountered. He husbanded his energies, and brought his Will-power to bear with crushing force upon the point to which he directed it. Tenacity, firmness of purpose, were among his most conspicuous attributes, and these are merely other names for Will-force. Nor can it be doubted that the combined Will-force of the North counted for much in the issue of the struggle; and the existence and operation of such an aggregated force must be admitted as a logical implication of the theory of individual Will. The mystical author already cited says: "Man has but to will long enough, to make the world as he would have it." Surely this is one of the lessons taught by Balzac's "*Comédie Humaine*," and still more emphatically by the experience of the world he has described so powerfully. But the Will that dominates must have been trained, and above all it must comprehend and obey that Law of Continuity which obtains as strongly in the spiritual as in the physical universe. Drilled and curbed, fixed steadfastly upon an object and held resolutely to the pursuit of that, even the natural, uncultivated Will of the West can accomplish great, or at least important, and sometimes momentous things; but it can deal only with the objects of sense.

Thought, according to Louis Lambert, is a special product of the human Will. He put Will before Thought because, as he observes, "To think, it is necessary to will;" and he proceeds, "Many beings

exist in the state of Will, without ever arriving at the state of Thought," — volition being, in this view, external and material, and Thought internal and spiritual. All the senses he would reduce finally to one; that, namely, of sight or perception. Touch, taste, hearing, and smell, he contends, are each and all forms of vision adapted to those modifications of the universal Substance which man is capable of cognizing in its two conditions, modified and unmodified. All that thus offers itself to human apprehension may be reduced to some elements whose principles are in the air or the light, or in the principles of air or light. This is an elaboration of the fundamental axiom concerning the character and properties of the universal Substance. The statements which follow, in regard to sound, color, and perfume, require some remodelling to adjust them to more modern theories. Both Light and Sound are now known to possess more than the purely sensational existence which was all that could be formerly attributed to them. They are indeed, in a sense, "modifications of the air," as Balzac phrases it, — that is to say, the impressions they produce are caused by undulations propagated through the luminiferous ether, or whatever else we may choose to call the ethereal substance through whose vibrations they are manifested. The adjustment of our auditory and visual organs to the reception and registering of the Light and Sound waves of course counts for much in the process; and, as already observed in this analysis, the imperfection of our physical organs limits the sensations we are capable of re-

ceiving both from Sound and Light. Also, our eyes and ears translate the impressions they receive, representing to our consciousness as continuous rays or sounds that which reaches them in the form of vibrations more or less rapid. Why a certain rate of molecular oscillation should become a yellow color, another red, a third blue, we do not, and perhaps we cannot, know. In regard to perfume, said by Balzac to be a combination of air (or ether) and light, the definition is somewhat confused. There are few subjects more interesting than the propagation and persistence of perfumes, and the typical illustration of the grain of musk (used by Louis Lambert) opens an exceedingly difficult and little understood line of inquiry. The law of the dissipation of energy seems in this case to be contravened; for if odors are diffused by molecular vibration, the source of the transformation of energy must eventually be brought to a state of equilibrium, and experiment does not show, in the case of the most powerful perfumes, such as musk and the Ottar of Rose, any appreciable diminution of mass in the centre of emanation, even after comparatively long periods of time.

In his definition of the Natural Forces, Balzac seeks to establish direct filiations between them and the human faculties. He allies Thought with Light, and Speech with Sound, and he adds the striking statement that the various transmutations of the primal Substance are regulated and determined by Number alone. The prominent part occupied in all mystical doctrines by speculations and assertions regarding the occult powers and qualities

of numbers is no doubt familiar to most, if there are not many who comprehend the meaning of these theories. It is to be presumed that Balzac had reference to the Kabbalistic and Oriental hypotheses in this sentence, but he also stated in it what is a well-attested fact in physics. The character of the sensations produced upon the human organs by sound and light waves depends upon the number of oscillations which occur in the vehicle of the light or sound. We owe this knowledge to the spectroscope, which was invented by Bunsen and Kirchoff recently, — that is, since the death of Balzac. Now the spectroscope dissects the light which is passed through it, and enables us to measure the oscillations which produce upon our retina the effect of the several colors. The length of a light-wave varies from about seven hundred and sixty millionths of a millimetre at the red end of the spectrum to about three hundred and ninety-three millionths of a millimetre at the violet end. When these undulations (which are propagated at the rate of 188,000 miles per second) are of such a width that three hundred and ninety-five trillions of them enter the eye in a second, they produce in us the sensation of red light. When they are so small that seven hundred and sixty-three trillions strike the eye every second, they produce the sensation of violet light. Omitting the ciphers, which in designating such great numbers are likely to be confusing, it may be said that the differences between the colors are represented by the following figures: red, 395; yellow, 535; blue, 622; violet, 763. So that when Balzac

speaks of number as the main agent in differentiating the manifestations of the Natural Forces, he is in full accord with conclusions of science which were not reached during his lifetime. Sound, as is well known, travels a million times slower than Light, its progress in ordinary air being only 1,100 feet per second. But Thought? In Louis Lambert's own words: "From thy couch to the frontiers of the world there are but two steps: Will — Faith!"

In the second category the occult significance of Number is more distinctively dealt with, and it will be best to examine that difficult subject separately. The first category no doubt includes also some esoteric references, but it has to do with what may on the whole, and in contradistinction from the second, be considered exoteric propositions. In the eighth axiom, Balzac, however, anticipates his more abstruse speculations somewhat. This section treats of the organization of the primary Matter through the segregation and grouping of molecules. Hence organic life is developed, and man becomes a vehicle and agent of the primal Force, capable of reacting upon Nature with potent effect. But there is in man, says Lambert, a controlling principle which defies analysis. Science may some day discover the elements of Thought and Will, but it never can trace that unknown quantity which he calls "the Word," and which itself "incessantly engenders Matter." What is this "Word," of which it is asserted that it "burns and devours those who are not prepared to receive it"? The answer

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is that it is the Logos, — the immanent Divine Spirit, which informs and dominates all Substance, — the operative Mind, — the Thoth and Hermes of antiquity. The Logos is the Speaker, the Maker, the Manifestor, the Adonai of the Kabbala, that spirit of which John speaks when he writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This too is the “Light that shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” Lambert well says that the Word “burns and devours those who are not prepared to receive it;” for it is manifested only to such as have by development of the Inner Man rendered themselves capable of apprehending it. Materialism dismisses all consideration of the Logos as “mystical,” and therefore, from its point of view, of no significance or value; and it is the materialists who are referred to by Lambert as those devoured by the communication of the Word. Their darkness cannot comprehend the Light. They have elected to continue in the world of phenomena; that is, according to the oldest of wisdom-religions and philosophies, to remain under the spell of Māya, the spirit of Illusion. It is possible so to live and not to miss much. Those who are content with what the phenomenal world offers escape much suffering for the moment, — but at a great ultimate cost to themselves.

The Word engenders matter; in fact, it is the centre of the Cosmos, and it is only by union with it that man can overcome the bonds of necessity, and raise himself to the highest powers of which he is capable. This

union again is possible only through the cultivation and discipline of the Will, — that Force which dominates all others in nature, and which may be developed to marvellous extent both for good and evil. Anger, observes Lambert, in the ninth axiom, like all manifestations of passion, is a current of human force which operates electrically. Anger, in so far as it embodies malign volition, is closely akin to what the superstitious were wont to denominate “black magic.” To convert it into the latter it is only necessary to intensify the manifestation. The benign Will, as exhibited in the phenomena of what is called Animal Magnetism, possesses well-attested therapeutic attributes. With or without the aid of the Imagination it can relieve pain, arrest morbid processes, and restore health. The co-operation of the Imagination with the Will facilitates its operation in all cases, whether benign or malignant. The history of Witchcraft, misinterpreted by materialist historians, abounds with illustrations of this truth, which is to-day axiomatic in physiological psychology. According to the common reading of those strange phenomena, all the charges of sorcery, all the myriad specifications of physical and mental injuries sustained, were subjective delusions. But this explanation has the fatal defect of not covering the phenomena. The evidence that in many cases those who accused others of witchcraft really had suffered injuries is at least as strong as that upon which the majority of historical events are accepted; nor are we under the necessity of going to the Middle Ages for proofs of phenomena which may be

paralleled in our own times. In the South Seas to-day there is a tribe of savages who believe that it is practicable for one man to pray another to death; or, in effect, to *will* him to death. Taken alone this belief might very well be dismissed as a delusion; but it cannot be taken alone, and for the reason that it is based upon facts. In the island referred to the practice of praying enemies to death is actually carried out; and the person who knows that his adversary is about to resort to this practice calmly disposes of his property, retires to his hut, composes himself on his bed, and in the course of a few hours dies.

This may seem incredible to those who do not understand the relation of Will-power to vitality, but it is capable of a sufficiently simple physiological solution. Every physician knows and acts upon the fact that the cure of disease depends largely upon the will of the patient. If the latter desires strongly to live, the process of recovery is facilitated. If on the contrary there is no desire of life present, convalescence is retarded, and not seldom it is impossible to prevent a fatal termination of the illness. In the case of the savages who die as described, without any apparent organic lesion, passing in a few hours from full health to death, it is clear that the prime lethal agent is paralysis of the will-force. The savage fully believes that he is doomed and that nothing can save him. From that moment not only does he cease to evince that desire for life which underlies all healthy vital action, but his vital powers are depressed by the expectation of death, and

the unalterable conviction that it will occur. In such a state it is conceivable that the imagination of the subject himself might cause his death. That in the absence of any external employment of malign volition, such a result may ensue has been demonstrated by the experiment of causing prisoners to believe that they had slept in beds which had been used by cholera patients. In this case the men took the cholera, and some died of it, though the beds had really not been exposed to infection.

The fact that Fear can kill is moreover so familiar that in the East it has been made the subject of a popular proverb in connection with the Plague; and this Fear which reacts so fatally upon the physical organism is Imagination made morbid by the paralysis of Will, as in the other cases cited above. Much has been made of the remark that Superstition dies as Knowledge advances; but the remark is only a half-truth, and, like all half-truths, is misleading. To suppose that because the common belief in Witchcraft has disappeared, therefore Witchcraft was a mere hallucination, or that therefore the agencies and influences which caused Witchcraft have been eliminated, would be great mistakes. At the present moment those agencies and influences flourish as vigorously as ever. The only changes that have taken place have been in the lines of their manifestation. The people who are panic-stricken by an epidemic of cholera or yellow fever or typhoid, are lineal descendants of the people who two hundred years ago believed that they could be bewitched by some old

woman, and who in numberless instances were undoubtedly more or less bewitched because of that belief. Anger, fanaticism, all the passions, observes Louis Lambert, "are living Forces. These Forces, when exercised by certain beings, become rivers of Will-power which embrace and sweep away everything." History is full of the most striking illustrations of the truth of this, and daily life presents perpetual instances in point. Moreover, it is to be observed that all these Forces operate most freely and powerfully upon the least disciplined minds, and control most easily the simple and the ignorant. In those strange epidemics of the Middle Ages recorded by Hecker — the dancing-mania, the Flagellants, the Child Pilgrimages — sympathetic contagion alone sufficed to establish and disseminate morbid affections which persisted through three centuries and disturbed the whole continent of Europe. At a much later period the extraordinary phenomena exhibited by the Convulsionnaires of St. Medard reproduced most of the mediæval symptoms and effects. During the last century the "Jumpers" in this country marked a recrudescence of the old nervous diseases, and from time to time during the past thousand years there have been outbreaks of the same strange contagions, — the negro camp-meeting being the most modern survival of them.

In these cases, however, what operates is suggestive of a blind and unintelligent Force. It is not really that, nor is the line of demarcation between these manias and the convulsive social and political movements caused by

apparent intellectual suasion, nearly so broad as at first sight it may seem to be. For while the first incitements to movements of fanaticism are usually in the guise of argument or dogmatic assertion professing to reveal great truths, these movements always degenerate rapidly and become in the end automatic and irrepressible. This has been the process followed by every great persecution, by many great revolutions, and by most agitations the work of which is finally determined by numbers and not by brains. Thus the fanaticism which made Islam a conquering power depended but a short time upon intellectual considerations. Thus the Reign of Terror grew out of that French Revolution which was begun by the peaceful philosophers of the *Encyclopædia*. Thus, in China, during our own time, the Tae-Ping rebellion changed from an attempt to establish free religious thought into a blind and general butchery. The "living Forces" spoken of by Lambert, in all these and many other instances asserted themselves over the feeble volition of the masses, and set the latter in paths whose direction they could not perceive, and whose destination they would never have striven to reach of their own motion. They were carried away, as Balzac puts it, by "rivers of Will," and similar effects are to be recognized in all popular agitations involving what is called enthusiasm. The part played by Reason on all such occasions is notoriously subordinate. The crowd is moved by its sympathies, not by its intellect, and its sympathies usually signify neither more nor less than its responsiveness to the power exerted by the superior Will.

According to Lambert, Will and Thought are living forces, and he employed the phenomena of mesmerism to support his theory that Will-force could be accumulated and emitted in such a manner as to affect not only other and weaker or less developed or prepared Wills, but to operate upon inorganic matter. Long after Balzac wrote, an English physician, Dr. B. W. Richardson, published a treatise entitled "Theory of a Nervous Ether." In this he suggested that there may be, "in addition to a nervous fluid, a gas, or vapor, pervading the whole nervous organism, surrounding, as an enveloping atmosphere, each molecule or nervous structure, and forming the medium of the influences transmitted from a nerve-centre to the periphery and from the periphery to the nerve-centre." The resemblance of nervous to electric force also impressed itself strongly upon Sir Benjamin Brodie, who observes that "the transmission of impressions from one part of the nervous system to another, or from the nervous system to the muscular and glandular structure, *has a nearer resemblance to the effects produced by the imponderable agents than to anything else. It seems very probable, indeed, that the nervous force is some modification of that force which produces the phenomena of electricity and magnetism.*" Here we have an almost complete scientific parallelism with Balzac's hypothesis. The recent researches by the Salpêtrière school of French physiologists into the phenomena of what is called hypnotism have produced in many minds an erroneous impression. From the time of Braid's experiments the

line of scientific inquiry may be said to have been controlled by a dominant idea, — the idea, namely, that all the phenomena of animal magnetism could be produced and explained without calling in the aid or assuming the existence of any external influence upon the patient other than physical and material. The theory of a fluid of any kind projected by the magnetizer was repugnant to the scientific mind, which indeed could only be induced to resume an investigation which had been several times abandoned, by the suggestion that the subject might be elucidated on purely materialistic lines. The hypothesis which explains Mind as a function of Body, and which has been maintained by Ribot, Maudsley, Hammond, and others, could not tolerate phenomena which were incapable of solution upon that assumption. At first, and so long as the experiments of Charcot, Richet, and their colleagues and followers were made altogether upon hysterical subjects, the physical theory appeared to be strongly confirmed. It was found possible to do all that Braid had done, and more, by material agents. The hypnotic states could be produced by fixing the patient's eyes upon any bright object; by directing the gaze upward; by simply inducing artificial strabismus; and finally, by suggestion. In the conditions thus produced it was found that the patient could be made to do anything; that directions from without appeared to control the hypnotized intelligence, to suspend the judgment, to obscure the moral sense, in fact to transform the subject into a complete automaton.

But as the inquiry proceeded it appeared that the exceptions to the supposed laws of hypnotism were so many and various as to compel pause and perhaps to necessitate reclassification. The theory that the magnetizer exercised no personal influence did not hold good in a number of cases. On the other hand, it did appear that frequently the influence of the magnetizer was profound and absorbing,—so much so that the subject was deaf and blind and oblivious to the presence, speech, and action of any and all other persons during the séance. There was, then, clearly a *rappport* between magnetizer and magnetized, and one which could only be explained upon some telepathic theory. In a recent work on animal magnetism by MM. Binet and Féré, of the Salpêtrière, while the bias of the authors against psychical interpretation is so marked as to detract from the value of their statements in several instances, they are constrained to admit that, “although the operator’s personality has not the importance which was formerly ascribed to it, yet it cannot be said to be altogether negative.” This personal influence they wish to get rid of by attributing it to an “elective affinity,” but they would be puzzled to define the meaning of that phrase. They proceed further: “The Abbé Faria, who induced sleep by *intimation*, has clearly shown that hypnosis may be effected by psychical action. His process consisted in desiring the subject, in an imperious voice, to go to sleep; and sometimes, without uttering a word, a commanding gesture was enough to effect his purpose.” In these cases the Abbé Faria in-

duced the hypnotic sleep by the direct exertion of his Will-power. MM. Binet and Féré, however, make a still more significant admission in combating those theorists who seek to explain hypnotic phenomena upon the ground of expectancy, attention, suggestion, or some other single agency. They say: "These assertions are too absolute. A whole series of purely physical agents exist which prove that sleep can be induced without the aid of the subject's imagination, against his will, and without his knowledge." What are these "purely physical agents?" When carefully examined the assumption that they are purely physical appears gratuitous. "It has often been said," the same authors observe, "that the psychical element in hypnosis vitiates all the attempts to give a physical explanation of this state." That is the truth, nor have MM. Binet and Féré succeeded where all their predecessors and contemporaries, from Braid to Charcot, have failed.

To study animal magnetism most profitably it is desirable that the inquiry should be pursued in Oriental countries, inasmuch as the education of the Will and its exercise upon both Man and Nature have been pursued in those countries from time immemorial, and with results which, when contrasted with the empirical studies of Western scientists, cause the latter to assume an almost puerile aspect. In India the application of Will-power has been carried to lengths which not long ago would have been thought incredible in Europe or America; but recent investigations are opening the eyes of

the Western nations to the scope of a Natural Force previously ignored or misunderstood. Balzac speaks of the capacity of human Will-force for evil. Hypnotic research has revealed some surprises in this direction. The phenomena of suggested action have proved that it is possible, by putting a sensitive person into one of the hypnotic states, to impress upon his mind as necessary to be done even the most criminal act; and that the perpetration of this criminal act may be set for some distant date by the magnetizer who suggests it, without in the least impairing the endurance of the influence or the fixedness of the mental impressions which induce it. So broad is the field of possibility, so startling are the ideas opened up by these experiments, that already several treatises have been written on the medico-legal aspects of the subject, and from one of these, by Dr. Gilles de la Tourette, some facts may be derived. The appearance of hypnotism as a criminal agency has appeared surprising and alarming to the public everywhere. In Lord Lytton's "Strange Story," where the murder of Sir Philip Derval is ascribed to suggestion, imposed by Margrave upon a man of weak mind, perhaps the first use was made of the lethal possibilities of animal magnetism as a motive for fiction. No reported case of alienism, however, no Salpêtrière experiment, is more fully in accord with morbid pathology than the processes described in that romance; and the most extraordinary feature of it, namely the appearance of the *scin-læca*, or shining shadow, on the wall of the murderer's cell, can be paralleled from the actual declarations of crimi-

nals, whose apparently insane ravings convinced medical experts of their irresponsibility.

In France, however, there have been a number of cases in the courts of late years, in which hypnotism has played an important part. Dr. de la Tourette relates several of these cases, and among others the remarkable one of a criminal named Castellan. In 1865, in the Commune of Solliès-Farlide (Var), there lived a farmer named Hughes, who had a daughter named Josephine, twenty-six years of age. One day a sort of tramp, a disreputable fellow named Timothy Castellan, lounged into the Hughes farmhouse, and was asked to have dinner. During the meal it was noticed that he looked fixedly and often at Josephine, who appeared somewhat confused. The meal finished, the household separated, and Josephine was left in the house alone. Castellan went a short distance away, but soon returned, and what followed was ascertained from the statements of the girl, the confession of Castellan, and the observation of people in neighboring villages. In effect, this dirty, hideous, and in all ways repulsive tramp so imposed his will upon the poor girl that she followed him out of her father's house, accompanied him like a dog through the woods and fields, slept with him in barns and stables, and submitted to the most dreadful abuse at his hands. During the continuance of this obsession, so to speak, she appeared to those who saw her and knew nothing of the facts, to be half-witted. By turns she denounced and coaxed her companion. Now she was furious, and submissive. But she always ended by doing what he

told her, and on more than one occasion he even made exhibition of his power over her, by compelling her to crawl across the room to him on her knees. In truth, a prolonged and terrible combat between his will and hers was going on all this time. When the concentration of his was relaxed, hers would gain the ascendancy, but the moment his attention became fixed upon her she found herself helpless ; and what was more, she could not then even continue to loathe and revolt from the brute, but was strongly and against her inclination drawn to him. After several days of this fearful experience Josephine made her escape while Castellan was held in conversation by some people they had met in the road, and once separated from him her volition began to act independently, and she was presently able, though not without difficulty, to relate the facts. Castellan was arrested, admitted the truth of his victim's statements, and volunteered the information that he had "served many women the same way," previously. According to custom the facts of the case were submitted to medical experts for their opinion. MM. Auban and Jules Roux were the referees, and they, following, as they declared in their report, the conclusions of the doctors Tardieu, Devergiè, Coste, and Broquier, of the Marseilles School of Medicine, held that "by the manipulations called magnetic, it is possible to exert, upon the will of any person exceptionally disposed by nervous temperament, such an influence that his (or her) moral freedom may be perverted, or more or less completely destroyed." Three other physicians, chosen by the jury, endorsed this and all the other conclusions of

MM. Auban and Roux, and Castellan received a sentence of twelve years' imprisonment. In this case it is to be observed that the state produced in the victim was not what is called "profound hypnosis," but a condition of semi-consciousness in which all her volitional capacities and tendencies were held in suspension. The paralysis, moreover, as recognized by the medical experts, was moral no less than physical. She could not offer bodily resistance, nor could she even oppose a consistent or sustained psychical resistance. The domination while it lasted was almost complete, and it was unmistakably the domination of Will-force.

The implications of this case were so serious that it caused a great sensation. In India the malignant possibilities of Will-power have been understood for ages, and evil men have systematically availed themselves of this formidable aid to their undertakings. Thus the Bheels and Thugs, organized bodies of thieves and assassins who inherited the most dangerous associations of criminal acts with religious motives, practised what is now called hypnotism habitually. In this way the Thugs anæsthetized the predestined victims of the fatal scarf, and avoided all struggles and resistance. The same agency was resorted to by gangs of child-stealers who infested the country, and Dr. Esdaile, who introduced animal magnetism as an anæsthetic to the Calcutta hospitals, had a curious experience with a case of this kind. One day he saw a strange Hindu leading a little boy along the street, and it struck him that the child did not seem to be accompanying the man willingly.

Thereupon, suspecting abduction, he stopped and proceeded to question the stranger, whose answers, though shrewd, were not altogether satisfactory. Next the boy was examined, but he appeared to be in a dazed state. At first the operation of a narcotic was suspected, but by degrees the child's wits returned to him, and then all he could say was that the man had beckoned to him as he was standing near his father's house; that he had been drawn to the man's side, he could not tell how; and that was all he remembered or could state. It turned out that the abductor had carried the boy a long distance—many day's journeys—with him, but the spell was not broken during this time. Dr. Esdaile subsequently experimented upon several of his hospital patients, and found that he could hypnotize the majority of them with ease, and cause them to carry out his suggestions.

Balzac intimates a belief that the power of the human Will may under proper conditions be exercised appreciably upon inanimate objects. Now Arago, in a report to the French Academy of Sciences, stated the conclusion that, "under peculiar conditions, the human organization gives forth a physical power, which, without visible instruments, lifts heavy bodies, attracts or repels them according to a law of polarity, overturns them, and produces the phenomena of sound." This is in effect a definition of the "Psychic Force" postulated by Sergeant Cox. In a curious essay by Francis Gerry Fairfield, directed toward the explanation of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, a somewhat similar position

is taken,—the author positing a “nervo-dynamic” process as the agency by which the lifting and overthrowing of heavy bodies, without apparent contact, is produced. This writer endeavors, however, to trace a connection between the physical conditions which give rise to such phenomena and the pathological state known as larvated epilepsy, and here he becomes an unsafe guide. In India the purely physical nature of a large class of phenomena which in the West have been ascribed to disembodied intelligences, is demonstrated by the frequent production of identical effects through the concentration of the Will by trained experts. The Indian conjurers, many of whose feats have completely baffled all attempts at solution by Europeans, pretend that they are helped by the Pitris or ancestral spirits. But there are many Fakirs who produce quite as surprising and inexplicable phenomena solely, as they affirm, by the disciplined exercise of Will-power. Much information on this head may be found in the works of Jacolliot, and thousands of Anglo-Indians have had personal experiences of the same kind. Among the commoner feats so performed, are the imparting of motion to inanimate objects; the extinction of lamps or candles at a distance; the apparent suspension of gravitation by alterations in the weight or the mobility of heavy articles; the imposition of temporary paralysis upon one or more of the spectators. To these and similar phenomena might be added the production of illusions and hallucinations, — *Maya*, as the Hindus term it, — by reason of which those present are caused to ascribe

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objective existence to appearances which are really subjective. The rarity of authentic records of collective hallucination in the West has led to doubts concerning its possibility. This rarity, however, may plausibly be explained by the prevailing Western neglect of volitional training and discipline. But it must not be overlooked that in the Orient the claims of thaumaturgy are wide, and that the Yogis assert their mastery over natural forces the manipulation of which is as yet beyond the reach of Western science. Such an agent they represent to be the *Akasa*, which is closely allied to if not identical with the *Hyle* of the Greeks, and the "Ethereal Substance" of Louis Lambert. The *Akasa* is a subtler force than electricity, and capable only of psychological control. The description of *Vril*, in Lord Lytton's "Coming Race" is in fact that of *Akasa*. It is "the all-permeating fluid." It "is capable of being raised and disciplined into the mightiest agency over all forms of matter, animate or inanimate. It can destroy like the flash of lightning; yet, differently applied, it can replenish or invigorate life, heal and preserve, and on it they (the *Vril-ya*) chiefly rely for the cure of disease, or rather for enabling the physical organization to re-establish the due equilibrium of its natural powers, and thereby to cure itself." This subtle and potent fluid falls under the dominion of the cultivated and enlightened Will, and extends the potentiality of the latter almost indefinitely.

There is a modern form of scepticism which is entitled to no respect, inasmuch as it is grounded in

ignorance, not merely of Oriental, but of Occidental science. The true man of science in either hemisphere rightly considers incredulity not less dangerous than credulity. Dr. Abercrombie well observes that "while an unbounded credulity is the part of a weak mind, which never thinks or reasons at all, an unlimited scepticism is the part of a contracted mind, which reasons upon imperfect data, or makes its own knowledge and extent of observation the standard and test of probability." In the same broad spirit Dr. Lee writes: "Reasoners who base their arguments upon the hitherto known laws of nature do not consider how limited is our knowledge of those laws; that this knowledge is continually extending and opening out new prospects to our view; and that any people's or any individual's experience of them depends in great measure upon the circumstances under which the population or the individual is placed, the degree of mental culture possessed by them, and the opportunities afforded them for acquiring the requisite information; and, moreover, that a circumscribed knowledge can never be allowed to disprove positive and well-authenticated facts, however improbable they may appear to be." In considering the subject of Will-force, however, a far too general lack of information has to be met in regard to the position of Western science. In fact, the advances made in physiological psychology during the past twenty years have given a marked impetus to liberalism. The extent of the influence of Mind upon Body was never before so fully recognized, as may be seen in the following extract from the con-

cluding chapter of Dr. Tuke's important work, cited above. "We have seen," he says, "that the influence of the Mind upon the Body is no transient power; that in health it may exalt the sensory functions, or suspend them altogether; excite the nervous system so as to cause the various forms of convulsive action of the voluntary muscles, or depress it so as to render them powerless; may stimulate or paralyze the muscles of organic life, and the processes of nutrition and secretion, causing even death; that in disease it may restore the functions which it takes away in health, re-innervating the sensory and motor nerves, exciting healthy vascularity and nervous power, and assisting the *vis medicatrix Naturæ* to throw off diseased action or absorb morbid deposits." All this is admitted to be within the power of Mind and Will. Meantime a great body of evidence is accumulating which must force men of science more and more strongly toward those conclusions they have been so reluctant to approach. In the phenomena of hypnotic suggestion an avenue is opened through which Western Science may approach the positions so long held by the sages of the East. In the medico-legal aspects of animal magnetism, as in the phenomena of telepathy, will be found the finger-posts which point to the operation of Mind and Will at a distance. In all the inquiries now proceeding into obscure psychical and quasi-neural phenomena, the indications point in the same general direction. Nor need those who have long since satisfied themselves of the superior psychological knowledge of the Orient, be

impatient or intolerant of the slow and unfriendly progress of Western Science toward affiliation with its elder sister. For no greater triumph of Truth, no stronger proof of the genuineness of the conclusions of Eastern occult science, can be had, than the confirmation of its doctrines by a body of students working from contrary directions, by opposed methods, and in a sceptical and hostile spirit.

In the twelfth axiom Lambert treats of the world of Ideas. "Facts," he asserts, "are nothing; they do not exist; Ideas alone subsist." This affirmation, paradoxical as it appears, is at the basis of all philosophy. From the Vedas to Plato, from Plato to Kant, the impermanence of phenomena and the impossibility of knowing the noumenal have been posited. All knowledge of phenomena is merely a question of sensuous percipency, and all that we can attain to is Ideas. Lambert divides the world of Ideas into three spheres: that of Instinct, that of Abstraction, and that of Speciality or Specialization. This nomenclature might have been more felicitous, the terms having acquired such different conventional meanings that it may be difficult to avoid misapprehension in speaking of them. The masses of men, he goes on, occupy the sphere of Instinct, in which they continue for the most part without rising to the second sphere, — that, namely, of Abstraction. Desbarrolles accused Balzac of a contradiction because in the fifteenth axiom he says that between the spheres of Instinct and Abstraction there are beings who partake of both qualities. But the contradiction is

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not real, for in the fourteenth axiom he evidently intends merely to imply that the great majority of the Instinctives remain where they are. The sphere of Instinct is that in which Thought is little exercised, Volition is weak, the animal tendencies are strong, and the man is little more than one of the automatons of Descartes, — an instrument to be played upon by both the Abstractives and the Specialists. The sphere of Instinct in the world of Ideas is also that which connects it with the grosser modifications of Matter, those manifestations which are called distinctively material. The sphere of Instinct is that of savagery, and largely also that of barbarism; but it may, and no doubt does, include the lower phases of civilization, and it comprehends all who live sordidly without the desire of growth, material or spiritual; who accept degradation as normal; whose organization is so defective that they are unfitted to be the vehicles of exalted and evolutionary forces.

“Society begins at Abstraction.” This is a great advance upon the sphere of Instinct. Civilization is engendered by Abstraction. Laws, arts, social systems, spring from it. It is, in the words of Lambert, “the glory and the scourge of the world,—the glory, because it has created Society; the scourge, because it hinders Man from entering Speciality, which is one of the pathways to the Infinite.” That is to say, the sphere of Abstraction is that of materialist civilization. The qualities which shine most in this sphere are those which produce the greatest material effects; which create wealth and luxury and art and architecture and

the lower forms of poetry ; and which contribute to the gratification of all the lusts of the eyes and the “pride of life.” All purely intellectual life is included in this classification ; for the dry light of the Intellect can never illuminate those higher spaces which are capable of being reached and searched by the inner illumination of the spirit alone. But the pride of Intellect necessarily rebels against the doctrine that there can be any faculty superior to itself. Concerned wholly with appearances, it surrenders itself more and more to implicit belief in their reality, rejecting its own irrefutable knowledge of their impermanence as “metaphysics,” and seeking physical bases for all forms of life the more eagerly for that it is conscious of the limitations of its research. This is why Abstraction diverts man from Speciality,—even from the endeavor to attain to a comprehension of it. The distinction between the higher and the lower spheres drawn by Lambert is striking and suggestive. Abstractive man formulates right and wrong. His formulas are his scales. His justice is blind ; the justice of God sees,—that is the difference. In the sphere of the Abstractive, government by arbitrary formulas is the best that can be attained ; but it is in the ultimate analysis crude and imperfect, as testified to every day in all civilized societies by the inequities resulting from laws based upon broad generalizations. Were the inherent imperfection of all such legislation habitually recognized the evils incident to it would be less, because the recognition of a need for higher and more discriminating rules of conduct would

then tend to spiritual progress and the development of the loftier potentialities. But the ruling tendency of materialist civilization is toward acceptance of the existing standards of judgment as the best possible, or that can be hoped for; and this disposition to rest content with imperfection colors and influences the whole line of human progress, and confirms it in the anti-spiritual attitudes it has taken through absorption in phenomenal existence.

Speciality, Lambert continues, in the sixteenth axiom, consists in apprehending at the same time things material and things spiritual, both in their origin and consequences. The greatest human geniuses, he adds, are those who have left the darkness of Abstraction to attain the illumination of Speciality. The Specialist perceives things in their entirety, and at one glance. Jesus was a Specialist. To him, past, present, and future were one. The gift of Specialization is the product of the perfection of the interior vision. It includes Intuition, which is defined as one of the faculties of that Inner Man of whom Specialization is an attribute. Taine did not like these definitions. He complained that when Balzac left his microscope he became a Swedenborgian; and he echoed the common protest of the Abstractives against the incertitude and vagueness of the intuitional knowledge, apparently forgetting the incertitude and liability to error of all knowledge within the reach of the human mind through the inductive processes. Moreover, it is not true that Balzac is in any sense a mere follower of Swedenborg. Like all men of genius, he

takes the good and true wherever he finds it; but in the theories propounded in "Louis Lambert" the references to Swedenborg are found chiefly in the college period, and as the thinker grows he gets farther away from the doctrine of the Swedish Seer. Taine was offended by the statement that "the Specialist is necessarily the most perfect expression of Humanity, — the link which connects the visible to the superior worlds. He acts, sees, and feels through his Inner Being. The Abstractive thinks; the Instinctive simply acts."

We have here the sempiternal protest against the privileges of genius and its differentiation from ordinary humanity, which is as old, and perhaps as inevitable, as the strife between Materialism and Spiritualism. But the truth of the doctrine which postulates a something Divine in man is attested by the impotence of all efforts to reason away belief in this higher endowment. Just as the physiologist vainly endeavors to solve the problems of psychology by seeking in the brain and nerves the efficient causes of intellection, and is forever confronted by an impassable chasm; so the materialist wastes his energies in attempting to level the distinctions of genius and to deny those manifestations of a higher life which nevertheless continue to resist the analysis aimed at their degradation. But Balzac did not fall into the error of confounding genius with that which is much higher. In intimating that Jesus was a Specialist he indicates the scope of that phase of development. It is the highest to which the spirit of

man while incarnated can attain. In that exalted sphere may be classed only the few great teachers and exemplars who lived not for themselves, and who fixed those standards of spiritual and ethical aspiration after which humanity has toiled for ages laboriously, and at a distance which has often made the pursuit appear futile and unavailing. Genius, as commonly understood, breathes a denser air than these. Intuition alone can be a safe guide to those whose inner self is educated to the apprehension of spiritual impressions, and upon whose sensitive perceptions that most refined mode of enlightenment reacts infallibly. On a lower level, though still high, stands genius. As Lambert says, men of genius occupy a place between the spheres of Abstractivity and Specialization, and partake of the attributes of both spheres. Intuition is given to them that they may instruct and elevate their generation. Material knowledge is necessary to them that they may not speak above the heads of their audience and so dissipate their powers and diminish their usefulness. Thus is it that genius is so seldom allied with contentment. Its impulses are forever in contention. The man of genius must often echo the passionate lament of Faust : —

“Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust,
 Die einer will sich von der andern trennen;
 Die einer hält, in derber Liebeslust,
 Sich an die Welt, mit klammernden Organen;
 Die andre hebt gewaltsam sich von Dust
 Zu den Gefilden hoher Ahnen.”

In the end Faust is redeemed ; for, as the angels declare who bear away his soul, —

“ Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,
Den können wir erlösen.”

But the “ two souls ” which all through his earthly career have been warring in his breast cannot even after death be separated save by one mighty influence. So the perfected angels sing : —

“ Wenn starke Geisteskraft
Die Elemente
An sich herangerafft,
Kein Engel trennte
Geeinte Zwienatur
Der innigen beiden ;
Die ewige Liebe nur
Vermag's zu scheiden.”

Only Eternal Love can effect the separation between the earthly and the divine elements which experience, knowledge, and suffering have welded together, and which persist in their union, even in the purified nature, until the universal solvent, the Divine Love, purges and refines away the last traces of the earthly and corruptible.

If Faust furnishes an illustration of the exceptional class of men who, according to Balzac, occupy a middle ground between the spheres of Abstraction and Speciality, the character of Wagner, as drawn by Goethe, exemplifies the pure Abstractive. The commentators on Faust have invented many interpretations to Wagner. Thus Hinrichs is of opinion that he stands for Empiri-

cism, Faust representing Philosophy. Düntzer, again, holds that Wagner is "the representative of dead Pedantry, of knowledge mechanically acquired." Deycks thinks he is "the direct caricature of pure, rational, formal knowledge, without living thought or poetry, and especially without religion." Wagner is not indeed a difficult or obscure characterization. He is the incarnation of Intellectuality, unenlightened by imagination, unstimulated by the aspirations which are to bring the nobler Faust through suffering to redemption. Wagner is Positive Science, the materialistic mind which rejects Intuition as undemonstrable, which labels Religion Superstition, and which in the name of intellectual freedom dogmatizes with more than theological narrowness upon phenomena. When he interrupts Faust in the invocation scene, the daring Seeker gauges him thoroughly in the lines:—

“ Wie nur dem Kopf nicht alle Hoffnung schwindet,
Der immerfort an schalem Zeuge klebt,
Mit gier'ger Hand nach Schätzen gräbt,
Und froh ist, wenn er Regenwürmer findet.”

Wagner, the Abstractive, has but "one impulse." Nothing interferes with the completeness of his sordid enjoyment consequently. No doubts trouble him, no higher hopes weaken his strong hold on the material side of nature, no inner glimpses of the divine disturb or disillusionize him. He yearns for no wings, like Faust. The solid earth satisfies him. He is the type of purely material life and progress; a necessary type

and a useful one within its limitations; but a lower form of being than Faust symbolizes, and one whose active intellection renders him a more formidable enemy to spiritual advance than is the occupant of the lower Instinctive sphere. This last is dull and dense, but open to higher influences, because no pride of knowledge operates with him as a hindrance to receptivity. Thus, as Lambert puts it, "There are three degrees in mankind: The Instinctive, who is below the level; the Abstractive, who is upon it; the Specialist, who rises above it. Specialism opens his true career to man; the Infinite dawns upon him; he catches a glimpse of his destiny."

The twentieth axiom may be said to involve a logical development from what has gone before. There are, we are told, three worlds, or spheres, answering to the three stages of humanity. Whether Balzac had in mind at this point Swedenborg's doctrine of Correspondences, is an open question, but really of little significance, inasmuch as Swedenborg in the said doctrine introduced no new ideas, but followed the Kabbalas, which, together with all the archaic philosophies, hold to the same general view. "As above, so below," is an axiom of hermetic science. The three worlds are the Natural, the Spiritual, and the Divine. Humanity occupies the stage of the first, "which is fixed neither in its essence nor in its properties. The Spiritual world is fixed in its essence and variable in its properties. The Divine world is fixed both in its properties and in its essence." The meaning of this does not lie alto-

gether on the surface. The instability of the Natural World both in essence and properties (or faculties) is explained by the impermanence of Phenomena. According to the Hindu Philosophy phenomenal existence is *Maya*, — Illusion; and all students of Buddhism are aware of the way in which through Ignorance the Desire of Life (*Trishna*) binds men to the Wheel of Existence and makes them the fools of phantasmal shows, until after many incarnations they acquire the Four Noble Truths, and so by following the Path, escape from *Avidya* and find rest and reward in *Nirvana*. The impermanence of the phenomenal world, however, is not a doctrine peculiar to Hinduism or to Buddhism. It is a necessary conclusion from all philosophical meditation. The instability of the physical world, moreover, is a fact of science. Physics and metaphysics may be said to occupy common ground here. The second denies the possibility of knowing the realities of things. The first finds, in all forms of matter which lend themselves to chemical analysis, a tendency to unification in essence which, being correlated with a constantly increasing refinement of substance, at once suggests community of origin and baffles physical demonstration. But the more probable does the hypothesis of a single primal substance appear, the more impressive and marvellous must be considered the countless combinations and changes produced in that substance.

The Spiritual World is said to be fixed in its essence and mobile in its properties. The term "Spiritual

World " here embraces the sphere of the higher human faculties, but not the highest. The essence of Spirituality is divine, and therefore immutable and fixed. But the faculties by and through which this essence manifests itself are, because complex, unstable. They can be resolved into their constituent elements. They are, like the physical forces generally, modes of motion, but of spiritual, not material motion. The distinction is rather one of degree than kind, from the point of view of Balzac's philosophy ; and it is necessary to bear this in mind, since materialistic science has caused great confusion by inventing a terminology which perpetually takes for granted the absolutely undemonstrable assumption that what is called Matter is different in kind from what is called Spirit. Now, it is of the essence of Louis Lambert's system that Matter and Spirit are simply different states of the same entity, and that the latter is the highest refinement of that which finds its grossest embodiment in dimensional matter. The intelligence which can perceive the ultimate identity of nature between the granite rock and the most tenuous gas, which perceives the materiality of both, should, it might be thought, find it possible to conceive the possibility of one unbroken chain of connection between ponderables and imponderables, between producer and product, between the source of organic life and organized existence. Here again the old doctrine of Correspondences applies, suggesting the attribution to those forces and properties which elude physical analysis, of the laws which govern the less subtle natural forces whose properties yield

their secrets to the ingenuity of human research by laboratory methods.

The Divine World “is fixed in its properties and in its essence.” This is the highest sphere, to attain which is to pass from the phenomenal to the noumenal; from the World of Effects to the World of Causes. Here alone is Reality found. Here alone are obscurities cleared away. Here alone, because the ultimate meaning of everything is then manifested, can there be satisfaction and rest. The Divine World is the highest conception to which the human mind can rise. Its atmosphere is far too rarefied to be breathed easily by finite beings, whether men or angels. It is the Unknowable of the Agnostics; the Unthinkable of all who reject Spirit and immerse themselves in Materialism. For no matter how intimate may be the connection between Spirit and Matter, it is quite possible for such as devote themselves wholly to the grosser manifestations of the universal Substance to become incapable of apprehending or enduring its more subtle phenomena; and this is what happens in the case of the Agnostics. The Divine World is that of which Krishna, discoursing with Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita, declares, —

“ Yet hard
The travail is for whoso bend their minds
To reach th’ Unmanifest. That viewless path
Shall scarce be trod by man bearing his flesh! ”

It is the sphere which Gautama Buddha perceived as the goal of all high endeavor, when, concluding his

vigils under the Bho tree, he summarized the teachings of the Path, and described the consummation : —

“ Free from Earth’s cheats;
Released from all the Skandhas of the flesh;
Broken from ties — from Upadanas — saved
From whirling on the Wheel ; aroused and sane
As is a man wakened from hateful dreams.
Until — greater than kings, than Gods more glad ! —
The aching craze to live ends, and life glides —
Lifeless — to nameless quiet, nameless joy,
Blessed NIRVANA — sinless, stirless rest —
That change which never changes ! ”

The subtlety of Hindu metaphysics has constituted a perpetual stumbling-block to Western scholars, of whom the majority have misapprehended the idea of Nirvana so completely as to cite, in proof of the atheism of Buddhism, a doctrine which is really the loftiest and most purely spiritual the human mind has produced. Spence Hardy, who in his “ Eastern Monachism ” and “ Manual of Buddhism ” has devoted considerable space to this much-vexed question, translates, in the former of the works cited, the conversations between the Sage Nagasena and King Milinda upon the nature of Nirvana. The Sage, in answer to Milinda’s questions, says : “ It cannot be said that it is produced, nor that it is not produced ; that it is past, or future, or present ; nor can it be said that it is the seeing of the eye, or the hearing of the ear, or the smelling of the nose, or the tasting of the tongue, or the feeling of the body.” Milinda then says : “ Then you speak of a thing that is not ; you merely say that Nirvana is Nirvana ; therefore

there is no Nirvana." Nagasena replies : " Great king, Nirvana *is* ; it is a perception of the mind ; the pure, delightful Nirvana, free from ignorance (*avidya*) and evil desire (*trishnawa*), is perceived by the rahats who enjoy the fruition of the paths." Again he compares it to the wind, whose existence is known though it cannot be seen or analyzed. " Even so," he says, " Nirvana *is* ; destroying the infinite sorrow of the world, and presenting itself as the chief happiness of the world ; but its attributes and properties cannot be declared."

In the Asangkrata sutra, Gautama has said of Nirvana that " it is the end of Sangsara, or successive existence ; the arriving at its opposite shore ; its completion." And again : " Nirvana is dhammá bhis-amaya, the end or completion of religion ; its entire accomplishment." It is difficult, in reading these definitions, imperfect as they necessarily are, to understand how Nirvana could have been represented as annihilation. For the meaning which stands out clearly from all the most authoritative attempts at definition is certainly that which the Chinese Buddhist Wong-Ching-Fu gave to it when he said : " This condition [Nirvana] we all understand to mean a final reunion with God, coincident with the perfection of the human spirit by its ultimate disembarassment of matter. It is the very opposite of personal annihilation." The later Buddhist metaphysicians did undoubtedly lean toward the theory of absolute extinction, but it is not possible to show that Buddha either taught or countenanced that view, or that it was held at all in his time. Max Müller pertinently asks (in his " Introduction to the

Dhammapada”), “Would not a religion which lands us at last in the Nothing cease to be a religion?” Dr. Oldenberg, who has examined the subject with great care, reaches the conclusion that Buddha himself refused to determine the question, taking the ground that his mission was to prepare the world for the change, and not to enter into explanations of the nature of the change. It was a Great Deliverance. That position was enough for him, and to that he adhered. But Dr. Oldenberg does not appear to take into consideration the fact that there has always been an esoteric as well as an exoteric doctrine; and it is in the former that the actual truth of the teaching concerning Nirvana must be sought by those who desire certainty of definition. The esoteric view is that which harmonizes with Balzac’s “Divine World.” In the language of “Isis Unveiled,” “Nirvana means the certitude of personal immortality in *Spirit*, not in *Soul*.” That is to say, it means the state reached through entire separation from all the conditions of earthly existence, and the complete and final enfranchisement of the spirit. That the nature of this enfranchised existence should be alike beyond human comprehension and expression is a necessity of the position. It is only by anthropomorphization that any form of immaterial existence can be conceived; and it need not be said that all such conceptions are as a matter of course erroneous and delusive. Therefore a definition of Nirvana must ever be impossible. It is that glory which passeth understanding. But however transcending finite apprehension, and however idle all

attempts to give form to it in our material terminology, it is not merely possible but necessary to consider the doctrine as the fitting culmination of a great and lofty faith, the truths and beauties of which are to-day taking hold upon many Western minds, if the scope and significance of the system are to be grasped.

Of the three Worlds, Lambert proceeds, there are three cults, which are expressed by Action, Speech, and Prayer; or, in other words, by Fact, Understanding, and Love. The most material of these three appertains to the Instinctive sphere; the second, Understanding, to the Abstractive; and the third, Love, to the Specialist, which is nearest to the Divine. The dominant influences in the least developed races and peoples find expression in direct contact with external nature. The stage of Savagery indeed is often marked by alternations of almost vegetative indolence and apathy. Thus the savage marvels at the energy and restlessness of the civilized man. But this indolence is not the sign of a meditative habit. On the contrary it is akin to the stolid unthinking placidity of the ruminants. An Indian chief observed to a white man: "You do not know the pleasure of doing nothing and thinking nothing; and yet next to sleep, that is most delicious." In the stage of Barbarism the yearning for action becomes stronger, and it persists into the ensuing stage called Civilization, but here tempered, guided, and given new efficacy by the development of Understanding. Speech, as the race advances, becomes in its turn the dominant influence. The mystery of the spoken word underlies

every step of real progress. This symbolizes and indicates the final triumph of Spirit over Matter. In the beginning Force rules nakedly. Superior muscular power was the basis of the first sovereignty. As men improved physically, — as the prognathous jaw of the Cave-dwellers receded, — the brow rose, and Thought grew into a social influence. The general experience furnished crude rules of conduct, which the few specially endowed men formulated, and thenceforward Speech was a moulding force. In the sphere of the Abstract, Understanding as manifested by the superior members of the race, and Action as supplied by the less advanced, suffice to engender the whole of what is termed material civilization. The sphere of Ideation is, speaking broadly, the highest yet attained; for the widely separated and numerically few Specialists who have appeared, to signalize momentous changes and to lead great forward movements, cannot be regarded as illustrating the capacities of the race at any period. Their fate, and the reception given to their work, on the contrary, emphasize the fact that they were, so to speak, born out of due time, and were therefore uncomprehended by their contemporaries. The world has always crucified its saviors. It has ever preferred Barabbas to Christ. Nor need this apparent cruelty be imputed to the slayers for iniquity. The dying adjuration, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!” embodies a profound truth. The sluggish upward impulses of mankind would fail to achieve the deliverance of the race from the bonds of matter.

were they not stimulated and invigorated from time to time by Divine Incarnations. These involve deliberate and predestined sacrifices, and in the nature of the sacrifice no less than in the nature of the doctrine taught by the Sacrificed, is presented the highest and most vital Theosophy.

The ruling impulses of the undeveloped man are purely egotistic. It takes him some time even to discover that his own interests demand a measure of regard for the interests of his fellows. The idea of putting the good of another before his own does not occur to him. Presently the tribal necessities compel some kind of service to the community, but it is rendered on the most practical and selfish grounds, if not under compulsion. Ages pass in tedious struggles before the germs of the emotion called Love become recognizable. The sexual relations, first governed by Instinct, then by Lust, are gradually modified and to some extent elevated by the rise of a purer influence. Not for mere material or intellectual gratification and satisfaction was this purifying influence brought into operation. The education of Humanity is laborious and only to be achieved by Infinite patience. In the emotion of Love men were to be taught to recognize the descent of a nobler influence than either Action or Reason could generate. Line upon line, precept upon precept, this great lesson was to be inculcated. With characteristic perversity, men began by abusing their newly discovered privileges, but step by step the divine revelation impressed itself upon the more advanced por-

tions of the race, and opened their eyes to the beauties of Altruism. When Christ said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another," he spoke above the understanding of his auditors. But though the doctrine of Love had been taught five centuries before by Sakya Muni, it was to a new world, practically not reached by the teaching of the Indian Avatar, that Jesus declared himself; and to that world, then far behind Asia in culture and knowledge, the commandment was in fact new. Nor, when due and necessary allowance has been made for the effects upon the creed of Christendom of the barbarism which prevailed for more than a millennium after its nominal adoption, can it be seriously denied that it has kept the sacred fire burning upon the altar through all vicissitudes, and has handed down to the nineteenth century, marred indeed and obscured by carnal accretions, but still not extinct, the central truths of the doctrine, the inner meaning of the Great Sacrifice. Nay, more, for in the cult of the most venerable of all the Christian churches, — in that phase of its cult, moreover, which has provoked the bitterest hostility of its opponents, — in that cult of Mary which has been so often indicted as idolatrous, — may be recognized a more penetrating insight, not only to the needs of humanity, but into the significance of the Divine scheme, than is manifested in the austere and most rigid following of the Semitic Unitarian idea.

The Wisdom-Religions alone take full account, however, of the part played by the feminine principle in all

things and events. If the Western world has required eighteen hundred years to bring it to even its present dim perceptions of the rights of Woman in the social and political organism, one main factor in this arrest of development must be sought in the defective religious vision caught from Palestine, and which by Judaizing Christianity perverted the teachings of its Founder on a vital point, and deprived Christendom for centuries of the most powerful civilizing and ennobling influence in existence. The Age of Chivalry marked the one really fine and earnest effort made during this long period of intellectual and religious twilight, to right the established wrong. It was, however, overlaid with an artificial fantasy, and it was confined to a comparatively narrow range. With the advent of a more extended material prosperity, with the growth of what are called practical ideas, — ideas, that is to say, about wholly ephemeral conditions, — that experiment closed in failure. The position of Woman no doubt underwent important changes. For ages she had been the slave and chattel of Man. Then she was lifted to the higher condition of his helper and his convenience. Finally she became his toy and plaything. He could not bring himself to admit her equality, but he was too humane by this time to treat her after the old brutal manner. He could not countenance her aspirations; but he was willing to furnish her with anodynes; and, having drugged her soul to sleep, behaved to her somewhat tenderly.

Yet, notwithstanding the disadvantages and restraints and disabilities under which she has labored, — and

under many of which she still labors, — Woman has maintained with surprising steadfastness the position to which her characteristic endowments destined her from the beginning. “Morally,” says Lecky, “the general superiority of women over men is, I think, unquestionable. . . . Self-sacrifice is the most conspicuous element of a virtuous and religious character, and it is certainly far less common among men than among women, whose whole lives are usually spent in yielding to the will and consulting the pleasures of another. There are two great departments of virtue: the impulsive, or that which springs spontaneously from the emotions, and the deliberative, or that which is performed in obedience to the sense of duty; and in both of these, I imagine, women are superior to men.” The same acute thinker observes of that cult of the Virgin already alluded to here: “Whatever may be thought of its theological propriety, there is, I think, little doubt that the Catholic reverence for the Virgin has done much to elevate and purify the ideal of women, and to soften the manners of men.” It brought into prominence and gave scope for the exercise of that feminine influence which, no matter how dwarfed and distorted, represents the highest possibilities of human attainment, and symbolizes that principle of Divine Love which is the key to the secrets of existence, — the connecting link between Earth and Heaven. The concluding lines of Goethe’s great drama are: —

“Das Ewig Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.”

The Eternal Womanly — the Woman-Soul — draws us upward.. The meaning of the entire closing scene of Faust is clear. It is the Apotheosis of Love, which is presented as the all-redceming and all-uplifting power. Here, as shown to us through the symbolism of Woman's virtues and devotion, the sublime potentialities of the Divine principle are but dimly foreshadowed. In a higher sphere of existence alone can mundane anticipations be realized, and through the union there of the mental with the Divine. This is no new doctrine. The complementary necessity of the feminine principle for the elucidation of all the deepest religious and moral problems was recognized in remote antiquity. Plato taught it, yet he did not originate it. The belief existed in India as far back as the pre-Vedic period, and it entered into the teachings of the sages who disseminated the faith now known as that of Zoroaster. In all the mystical scriptures the soul is symbolized by Woman, — hence the Greek myth of Psyche. In the religion of ancient Egypt the goddess Isis held superior rank to her consort. The mystic interpretation of the Edenic state represented Adam as Sense and Eve as Soul; and in the imputation to the latter of the sin which caused the Fall, the esoteric version is interpreted as signifying that the Soul first offended in neglecting the instruction of the creative Word, — the Logos.

“Love,” says Amiel, “sublime, unique, invincible, conducts straight to the verge of the great abyss, for it speaks directly of the Infinite and Eternal. It is

essentially religious. It may even become Religion." And again he says, in his meditative way: "Who knows if Love and its benefactions, so evidently a manifestation of a universal harmony, is not the strongest demonstration of a sovereignly intelligent and paternal God, as it is the shortest path by which to reach Him? Love is a faith, and one faith appeals to another. This faith is a happiness, illumination, and strength;" and he speculates about himself, writing: "It is perhaps through Love that I shall regain Faith, Religion, Energy, and Concentration." Amiel was too thoroughly a modern to comprehend clearly the deeper problems of life, but his nature was less absolutely masculine than usual, and by his feminine principle, clouded as it was, he obtained an inkling of the truth. Yet his sensibility and spiritual perception were much greater and clearer than those of the men and women who parrot-like repeat, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and, "God is Love," without attaching to those words any special significance, without understanding or desiring to understand their true and full meaning. How dark a passage to Balzac's countrymen, half a century ago, must have been the final sentences of the first category in "Louis Lambert,"—"Perhaps one day the inverse sense of 'And the Word was made flesh' will be the epitome of a new gospel, which will read: 'And the flesh shall be made the Word; it shall become the Utterance of God.'" Yet to those who have followed with attention the development of this curious philosophy there can be little ob-

securit^y here. If indeed Love is "creation's final law," a time must come when it will possess its own; not as, heretofore, in visions and ecstatic vaticinations only, but in fact. The Incarnation was a descent of Spirit into Matter; the acceptance of hampering conditions by the soaring Soul.

In the culmination of human existence it is permitted to those who are not natural pessimists and who have studied the Wisdom-Religions to look forward to a final spiritual victory, — when, however slow and painful the journey may have been, the original and indispensable conditions of perfectibility shall have been regained, and the long-struggling race, having restored its feminine principle to that equal state which is requisite to harmonious and effectual evolution, shall have risen from the lower to the higher state of existence, and thus be capable of exercising the supreme spiritual functions. When that time comes — that "far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves" — the Flesh will indeed have become the Word; the Spirit will have obtained complete ascendancy over the Body; and in the uplifting and purification of Humanity it will have attained to Unity with the Supreme, and will be, no less than the Logos, "the Utterance of God." To the exalted and redeemed race the adjuration of the Angel of the Resurrection will indeed be changed, as Lambert concludes. "The Angel borne on the wings of the wind will not say, 'Arise, ye Dead!' He will say, 'Let the Living arise!'" For in that perfected world Death will have been conquered

finally, and the only physical consequence of protracted existence on the earthly plane will be increasing refinement of the organism and decreasing bondage to material conditions. If we believe in the practically illimitable potentialities of life, if we hold that Spirit is as real and as active as organized Matter, the intimations of this bold and splendid speculation must possess for us an interest and an attraction far outweighing the difficulty of grasping somewhat abstruse and highly condensed propositions, and we shall recognize in what may at first seem the most audacious of Balzac's spiritual flights an inspiration not less genuine and fascinating than that of the Poet who

“Sings of what the world will be
When the years have passed away.”

We now enter upon a consideration of that second category of “Louis Lambert's” philosophical concepts which Balzac himself evidently doubted the ability of his readers to comprehend, and which unquestionably are of a nature to become “the despair of the understanding” which approaches them without some preliminary study. Yet whoever is sufficiently interested in this unique and in many respects profound work must undertake the examination of the second category; for while it may at first sight appear to reiterate divers propositions laid down in the first, its scope, as intimated by the supposed biographer of Lambert, is broader than that of the preceding one, and it

includes a larger synthesis. Moreover, there is an "evident correlation" between the two categories, and the second complements and rounds out the first, while extending the general inquiry into regions not to be traversed without trouble, and the exploration of which, even in the most imperfect way, requires patience and lucidity at once. On the very threshold of our investigation, indeed, we encounter a difficulty which extends to the very foundations of all such research, and which it is the less possible to obviate because it grows out of those radical differences of human character and mental temperament which have divided thinking men from the beginning into two irreconcilable camps.

In the second category we have to do with Number and with the Egyptian, Pythagorean, and Kabbalistic doctrines respecting it. Now, the views entertained regarding Number have always fallen, broadly speaking, into two great divisions, and the boundaries of these divisions have corresponded approximately with those which define the positions of the Nominalists and the Realists. The difference between these schools may be briefly stated in the words of G. H. Lewes: "The Realists maintain that every General Term (or Abstract Idea) — such as Man, Virtue, etc. — has a real and independent existence, quite irrespective of any concrete individual determination, such as Smith, Benevolence, etc. The Nominalists, on the contrary, maintain that all General Terms are but the creations of the mind, designating no distinct entities, being merely used as marks of aggregate conceptions." This

dispute, however, is not merely a question of definitions ; it is concerning irreconcilable conceptions, — the conceptions, that is to say, of opposed classes of minds. The mind in which the spiritual elements predominate never finds any difficulty in perceiving and apprehending that which the mind controlled by the material element denominates mystical or transcendental. To the material mind, non-tangibility is nearly equivalent to non-existence ; and every conception which attributes to phenomena significances of a noumenal character is set down by this order of mind as metaphysical, and *therefore* more or less fanciful and frivolous. A very high degree of ratiocinative power is quite compatible with the tenure of the crassest Materialism ; and a striking illustration of this may be cited in the late Professor Kingdon Clifford, who quite evidently was so constituted as to be absolutely incapable of grasping any spiritual conceptions. Another and still more recent example is that of Judge J. B. Stallo, the author of an admirably lucid and cogent but curiously one-sided book, in which he convicts modern science of retaining a number of what he terms metaphysical theories. Evidently in his mind this is an evidence of intellectual weakness reaching almost to puerility ; nevertheless, it is certain that unless the growth of Materialism should be so rapid and extensive as to extinguish spirituality completely, the spiritual element in humanity will continue to recognize that side of existence in the future, not less emphatically and earnestly than in the past.

The impossibility of eliminating the metaphysical from human thought is indeed manifested in one of those departments of science which Judge Stallo criticises. He complains that in the higher mathematics, and especially in transcendental geometry, abstractions are objectified in a most reprehensible manner. This he calls "the reification of concepts," — a terminology in itself implying either a total separation between Matter and Spirit, or the attribution of all phenomena, mental as well as physical, to the former, to the absolute denial of the latter's existence. The significant fact, however, is that Numbers to-day, no less than in the time of ancient Egypt, and of Anaximander and Pythagoras, appear differently to differently constituted minds; and that which Judge Stallo calls the "reification of concepts" is balanced by an opposite tendency, which may be termed "the spiritualization of things." As regards the doctrine of Pythagoras, it must be remembered that that philosopher wrote nothing, and that all we possess of his teaching has been extracted from the writings of others. It is equally important to bear in mind that he taught esoterically, and that beyond a certain point his pupils were forbidden to disseminate the instruction they had received. This consideration must cast doubt upon the version of the Pythagorean doctrines given by Aristotle, and in particular must cause the latter's interpretation of the numerical hypothesis to be regarded with suspicion. Mr. G. H. Lewes, who was himself an Agnostic, and who wrote a history of Philosophy for the purpose of demonstrating that

Philosophy neither had done nor could do aught but travel in a vicious circle, inevitably held by the Aristotelian view of Pythagoras. In order to fortify this position, however, he was obliged to reject the tradition that the sage obtained his ideas in Egypt, — a theory which has no support in history.

The properties of numbers have been examined in a voluminous literature. There is no ceremonial religion, and no body of esoteric doctrine or occult science, which does not rest upon, or is not largely concerned with, Number. Its symbolism is complicated, elaborate, and in itself a complete study. It is therefore impossible, in the present instance, to treat the subject adequately, or, indeed, to do more than glance at some salient points, consideration of which may tend to the elucidation of Balzac. In dealing with the first category, something was said of the relations of Number to modern scientific theories, and it was shown that, even in the most purely material signification, it held an important and sometimes a controlling position, as a means of measuring and differentiating forces and of determining formal variations in animal organisms. In the second category, Number is to be considered in a broader aspect, and it becomes necessary to state in outline the ancient beliefs on this head. Lambert's first axiom is to the effect that "Everything exists by Motion and Number;" and the second is the corollary of this, — "Motion is in one sense Number in action."¹ Now, the Pythagorean doctrine teaches that the fundamental essences

¹ Compare Zenocrates : "The soul is Number in action."

of things rest upon numerical relations. Numbers contain the elements of all things. Everything in Nature can be reduced to numerical conditions; and on the hermetic principle of correspondences the same general law applies to the spiritual world. “Numerals,” says one Pythagorean, “are the invisible coverings of beings, as the body is the visible one; that is to say, there is a double characterism of things, — one visible, and one invisible. Of the former, the visible shape is Matter; of the latter, Number, — and all that manifests itself is the result of an inward energy, and this energy is the emanation of a power. The greater or lesser quantity of the powers expresses the material number, and the greater or lesser quantity of the energy expresses the virtual number. There are, undoubtedly, invisible coverings, for each being has a principle and a form: but principle and form are opposite extremes, which cannot meet without a certain bond of union; this bond is formed by numerals.” In other words, Number is the vehicle through which the spiritual foundations of existence and phenomena are so presented as to be open to human comprehension, and so also as to exhibit the combinations, attractions, and repulsions, which in their ultimate material manifestation are perceived as harmonies and discords. To proceed with the citation: “Each principle is an unity; this becomes a real being through energy, which is, however, fixed by Number. As the laws and properties of things are impressed on their exteriors, so are the invisible laws and properties upon the invisible numerals; or, as by the action of the

sentient faculties through the senses we receive certain impressions, our mind also receives distinct ideas of the invisible positions and destinations of things, as soon as it can comprehend them." According to this doctrine the opposite elements of the universe, the finite and the infinite, are manifested everywhere in physical opposites ; namely, one and many, odd and even, right and left, up and down, fixed and moved, straight and curved, square and oblong, light and dark, good and bad. Unity is at once the essence of Number, and it is no number, — for it is the absolute, the deity. The primary numerals are 1–10, but numerical progression is virtually infinite, potentially. There are also compound numbers to express the various relations and compositions of being, their actions and influences ; there are central, mediary, and circumference numbers ; and there are false and impure numbers.

The Pythagorean Monad, proceeding from itself, generates the duad, which evolves the trinity ; and this, with the quaternary, or mystic four, composes the number seven, which has been considered to possess sacred significance from a very remote period. There is ground for the belief that the importance ascribed to seven originated in Hindostan ; and one strong piece of evidence in this behalf consists in the extraordinarily frequent employment of the numeral by the early Aryan philosophers. Thus we find mention of the *Sapta-Rishi*, or Seven Sages ; the *Sapta-Loka*, or Seven Worlds ; the *Sapta-Kula*, or Seven Castes ; the *Sapta-Pura*, or Seven Holy Cities ; the *Sapta-Duipa*, or Seven Holy

Islands ; the *Sapta-Samudra*, or Seven Holy Seas ; and so on through a long list of septenary divisions and distinctions. The ascription of peculiar characters, virtues, and properties to each number cannot be traced to its origin. Pythagoras followed the Egyptians, who possessed an elaborate system of mystic numbers ; the Egyptians drew from the Chaldæans and from India. In the Pythagorean scheme the following definitions may be found interesting. They are usually credited to the sage himself, though probably upon somewhat doubtful authority. “The unit, or monad,” he is represented as saying, “is the principle and the end of all. It is this sublime knot which binds together the chain of causes ; it is the symbol of identity, of equality, of existence, of conservation, and of general harmony. Having no parts, the monad represents Divinity ; it announces also order, peace, and tranquillity, which are founded on unity of sentiments ; consequently, One is a good principle. The number Two, or the duad, the origin of contrasts, is the symbol of diversity or inequality, of division and of separation. Two is accordingly an evil principle, a number of bad augury, characterizing disorder, confusion, and change. Three, or the triad, is the first of unequals ; it is the number containing the most sublime mysteries, for everything is composed of three substances ; it represents God, the soul of the world, the spirit of man. Four, or the tetrad, as the first mathematical power, is also one of the chief elements. It represents the generating virtue, whence come all combinations ; it is the most perfect

of numbers ; it is the root of all things. It is holy by nature, since it constitutes the Divine essence by recalling His unity, His power, His goodness, and His wisdom, — the four perfections which especially characterize God." The oath of Pythagoras was by the Quaternary Number, as implying the most solemn and comprehensive of adjurations. "The number five, or pentad, has a peculiar force in sacred expiations ; it is everything." The Pythagorean pentad plays an important part in occult science. "The number six, or the hexad, is a fortunate number. Seven, or the heptad, is a number very powerful for good or evil." Its frequent and evidently symbolic employment in the Bible will occur to every one. "The number eight, or the octad, is the first cube, — that is to say, squared in all senses, as a die, proceeding from its base two, an even number ; so is man four-square. The number nine, or the ennead, being the multiple of three, should be regarded as sacred." Nine is a sacred number in Buddhism and Brahmanism. "Finally, ten, or the decad, is the measure of all, since it contains all the numeric relations and harmonies. As the reunion of the first four numbers it plays an eminent part, since all the branches of science, all nomenclatures, emanate from and retire into it." It will be necessary to speak at greater length of some of the primary numbers hereafter. At present this general view may suffice. The connection of certain numbers with Christian dogmas is probably familiar to most readers, yet perhaps it is worth while to recall the formula. According to this,

One is the numeral indicating the Unity of the God-head ; Two points to the hypostatic union ; Three, to the Trinity ; Four, to the Evangelists ; Five, to the Sacred Wounds ; Six is the number of Sin ; Seven, that of the gifts of the Spirit ; Eight, that of the Beatitudes ; Ten is the number of the Commandments ; Eleven refers to the Apostles after the withdrawal of Judas ; Twelve, to the complete Apostolic College.

“ Know God,” says Pythagoras, “ who is Number and Harmony.” Again, he says that the human soul is “ Number moving itself.” Balzac asserts that Motion and Number give rise to all phenomena, and that Motion is in a sense Number in action. The correlation between these doctrines is obvious, but it is equally clear that they are not identical. To elucidate Balzac more thoroughly it will be necessary to supplement the Pythagorean ideas with some which belong to the theosophy of India. According to that system of thought there exist intimate spiritual relations between Number and Speech, and through Sound the human will may be exerted in the unseen universe. The whole elaborate scheme of *mantrams* turns upon this hypothesis ; and it follows from the latter that to the spoken Number, as to the spoken Word, there pertain certain powers the natural manifestation of which is on the spiritual plane. Thus it is held that the *Mantra* and *Brahmanas* of the Vedas comprise respectively a body of sacred magic and its exegesis, and that the verses of the *Mantra* can only be made to yield their concealed properties by pronouncing or chanting them in an order

and rhythm the character of which is explained in the *Brahmanas*. "Each metre," says Haug, "is the invisible master of something visible in this world; it is, as it were, its exponent and ideal. This great significance of the metrical speech is derived from the number of syllables of which it consists, for each thing has (just as in the Pythagorean system) a certain numerical proportion. . . . These forms, along with their contents, the everlasting *Veda*-words, are symbols expressive of things of the invisible world, and in several respects comparable to the Platonic ideas." Bulwer, in the "Strange Story," represents Margrave as chanting in some Indian tongue verses which had a strange effect upon the auditor. Travellers who have witnessed the more difficult feats of the Indian Fakirs know that the latter chant or recite *mantrams* in peculiar rhythm, and often with peculiar effect. In that country the potency of rightly employed words or numbers for thaumaturgic purposes is, it may be said, universally believed.

It may then be assumed that in his use of Number as associated so intimately with Motion in the genesis of phenomena, Balzac had in mind the archaic and mystical significance of numerals. But it is evident that he intended also another and less recondite signification; and this, which may for the sake of distinction be termed the physical meaning, is elucidated as we proceed with the second category. "Motion," he continues, "is the product of a force engendered by the Word and by a resistance which is Matter.

Without this resistance Motion would have been without result, for its action would have been infinite." This scarcely requires interpretation, being little more than a restatement of well-known physical laws, except as regards the energizing power of the Word, which in this connection stands for the Creative Will in operation. All the forces of Nature are now concluded to be modes of Motion; and it is by Number that these forces are distinguished, their properties gauged, and their differences ascertained. "Without resistance," says Herbert Spencer, "there can be merely empty extension." And again, "Matter cannot be conceived except as manifesting forces of attraction and repulsion." The ultimate reduction of the atheistic cosmology represents the Universe as matter in motion. Balzac proceeds: "The attraction of Newton is not a law, but an effect of the general law of universal Motion." This may seem at first sight both obscure and paradoxical, but it embodies keen suggestion and probable truth. In the first place, it cannot be too constantly remembered that Newton himself refused to give to his theory of gravitation the significance ascribed to it by the majority of those who followed him. His own position was quite clearly stated in his third letter to Bentley, in which he said: "It is inconceivable that inanimate brute matter should, without the mediation of something else which is not material, operate upon and affect other matter, without mutual contact, as it must do if gravitation, in the sense of Epicurus, be essential and inherent in it. And this is

the reason why I desired that you would not ascribe innate gravity to me. That gravity should be innate, inherent, and essential to matter, so that one body may act upon another at a distance, through a vacuum, without the mediation of anything else by and through which their action may be conveyed from one to another, is to me so great an absurdity that I believe no man who has in philosophical matters a competent faculty of thinking can ever fall into it. Gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws; but whether this agent be material or immaterial I have left to the consideration of my readers." In effect, Newton regarded gravitation not as a primary but as a secondary phenomenon, and since his time the progress of science has only emphasized the weight and extent of the difficulties which surround the whole subject; and these difficulties have impelled many men of science to seek some new hypothesis capable of accounting for the phenomena without involving the contradictions which are inseparable from the commonly accepted theory. Now, as Professor Tait observes: "One only of the many hypotheses which have been advanced to explain the cause of gravitation has succeeded in passing the first preliminary tests. Of course, the assumption of action at a distance may be made to account for anything; but it is impossible (as Newton long ago pointed out in his celebrated letter to Bentley) for any one 'who has in philosophical matters a competent faculty of thinking' for a moment to admit the possibility of such action."

There are accordingly “but two ways of accounting for gravitation: either it is due to differences of pressure in a substance continuously filling all space, or it is due to impacts, in some respects analogous to those of the particles of a gas which have been found to be capable of accounting for gaseous pressure.” So far all attempts to connect gravity with the luminiferous ether have failed. It does not follow necessarily that the impact theory is the true one. On the contrary, the theory as laid down by Le Sage has been met by Clark-Maxwell with objections which appear fatal to it, and the present state of the whole question witnesses to a defeat of science at every point. Action at a distance, it is asserted, is impossible, unthinkable. Yet this impossibility proves to be an ultimate fact which cannot be explained satisfactorily on the principles of impact and pressure of bodies in immediate contact. Science holds to hypotheses which do not elucidate the phenomena, and it adheres tenaciously to an axiom which is altogether irreconcilable with observation. The field, then, is still virtually unoccupied; demonstration has not been made; and though the claim that gravity is a mode of motion like light and heat and electricity may be met with the objection that this force apparently has no analogy with those other forces, there is ample room for discoveries calculated to modify this position. The chief observed difference between gravity and the other natural forces consists in the fact that whereas light, heat, sound, etc., require a calculable time for their transmission to distant points, the action of gravity is

apparently instantaneous. To employ scientific terms, the other modes of motion are propagated with a finite velocity. Yet gravity, though so much swifter in action than most of the other forces, is comparatively a weak force, dependent for its influence upon mass. Another peculiarity of it is its entire independence of all interfering bodies. It operates, to all appearance, as if such bodies were diaphanous, nor can any trace of deflection be perceived in its action.

But there may be natural forces as swift in their action as gravity. There may be modes of Motion with which science is as yet unacquainted. Professor Crookes has posited a fourth state of matter (called radiant) the properties of which are in several respects new, and acceptance of the reality of which would involve radical revision in many directions. In the present condition of uncertainty perhaps the most that should be ventured is this: that since the real nature or cause of gravitation is absolutely unknown, since no theory has been proposed in explanation of the phenomena which is capable of accounting for them or for all of them, and since all other natural forces have within the past fifty years been ascertained to be modes of Motion, it is not prudent to make gratuitous assumptions either affirmatively or negatively in the present case, and it certainly is not possible to disprove the proposition of Balzac in the premises. Of late years the scientific imagination has been so stimulated by great discoveries and the continual expansion of the field of possibility, that sometimes it seems question-

able whether a tendency to the invention of pure fictions is not manifesting itself. Such a suspicion, however, may in itself be simply a survival from the narrow ancestral conservatism which affects us all more or less. True science is bound to follow Truth though she lead the seeker to Hades, and in the startling guesses and suggestions latterly advanced, may hereafter be recognized adumbrations of great truths, — not indeed now for the first time disclosed to human intelligences, but re-discovered after being lost in a reactionary period by extinct races or peoples. It is a somewhat significant fact that some of the most remarkable of the new suggestions appear in the domain of mathematics and the department of geometry. The speculations of Gauss, Riemann, Zöllner, and others have probably rendered most of these novel ideas familiar to the general reader. Professor Tait in one of his lectures referred to one daring speculation as follows: “The properties of space, involving (we know not why) the essential element of three dimensions, have recently been subjected to a careful scrutiny by mathematicians of the highest order, such as Riemann and Helmholtz; and the result of their inquiries leaves it as yet undecided whether space may or may not have precisely the same properties throughout the universe. To obtain an idea of what is meant by such a statement, consider that in crumpling a leaf of paper, which may be taken as representing space of two dimensions, we may have some portions of it plane, and other portions more or less cylindrically or conically curved. But an inhabitant

of such a sheet, though living in space of two dimensions only, and therefore, we might say beforehand, incapable of appreciating the third dimension, would certainly feel some difference of sensations in passing from portions of his space which were less, to other portions which were more, curved. So it is possible that, in the rapid march of the solar system through space, we may be gradually passing to regions in which space has not precisely the same properties as we find here, where it may have something in three dimensions analogous to curvature in two dimensions, — something, in fact, which will necessarily imply a fourth-dimension change of form in portions of matter in order that they may adapt themselves to their new locality.”

Now, the significance of the above quotation is this : it shows with what eagerness, and with how free a use of the scientific imagination, even great mathematicians address themselves to the solution of problems arising out of phenomena the reality of which cannot be disputed, yet which have the appearance of transcending known laws of Nature. It is desirable that the perplexities of Science under such conditions should be recognized clearly, because those who, like Balzac, derive their beliefs from a broader and more comprehensive scheme of philosophy and psychology, assert the error of these followers of the mechanical theory, declare them to be groping in the dark hopelessly when they fly in the face of their own most cherished principles in propounding such notions as Professor Tait out-

lines above, and affirm that if men of science would pay as much attention to the higher conditions of Matter as they do to the lower, they might discover means of adjusting their now confused and conflicting hypotheses, and might even come to understand the possibility of a four-dimensional space in perpetual contact with that three-dimensional space in which the operations of the present phases of existence are carried on. For it is the crass Materialism of modern Science which interferes with its advance in the most profound and momentous problems. Even when such men as Professors Tait and Stewart entered upon what seemed to them a most daring venture, and wrote the "Unseen Universe," their main endeavor was to secure for the doctrine of a future life some slight scientific standing by demonstrating that after all it was not wholly or hopelessly unscientific. Students of Occultism and the Wisdom-Religion can but smile at such evidences of timid and creeping conservatism masquerading as the boldest speculation. Perhaps even the attempt to obtain a foothold for psychologic truth in the territory of Materialistic Science is commendable, but it is plain enough that stronger measures will be required before the reaction can be induced which is alone capable of vitalizing physical research.

The fourth axiom declares as follows: "Motion, by reason of Resistance, produces a combination which is life; with the preponderance of either of these agencies, life ceases." The extreme concentration of thought in these propositions renders them peculiarly

liable to misinterpretation. In the present case the breadth of the generalization is such that the full meaning of the author can only be reached by following the line of reasoning by which he arrives at his tersely stated conclusion. At the first glance it might be thought that the scientific heresy of Abiogenesis was involved in Balzac's statement, but it may be hoped that no reader who has carefully gone over the preceding pages can fall into such an error. Motion and Resistance, or Action and Reaction, operating upon Matter, produce the phenomena of life. Such is the position to be considered. Now, it is a generally accepted conclusion that dead Matter cannot produce a living organism; in other words, the law of Biogenesis is commonly held. The Unity of Nature is also received at present by scientific men, — as it was more than two thousand years ago by philosophers to-day almost forgotten, notwithstanding the obligations to them of modern thought. But half the current controversies turn on the interpretation given to the terms Matter and Spirit, and without definitely fixing the meaning to be given to these terms discussion is a waste of time. There are some advocates of the atomomechanical theory who, like Professor Tyndall, insist on regarding atoms or molecules as definite and distinct realities. Perhaps it is not of much consequence, and perhaps this realistic view facilitates the exercise of the scientific imagination. But it must be said that Balzac's Matter is in its ultimate analysis more refined than that of Professor Tyndall, and also a more logical and

philosophical conception, since as a matter of fact the Professor's solid and real atoms are pure abstractions. But there ought not to be an insuperable difficulty in pushing our conception of the tenuity of Matter beyond the farthest reach of chemical analysis, for within our grasp and under our eyes the combinations, mutations, and organizations of the primal substance are so manifold and subtend so wide an arc that the mind of man may fairly argue a practically illimitable potentiality for these Protean variations. If it is possible to accept the modern doctrine of a single physical basis of life, it is scarcely possible to stop there. And how much is conceded in accepting that doctrine! As Professor Huxley himself observed in propounding it, twenty years ago: "What, truly, can seem to be more obviously different from one another, in faculty, in form, and in substance, than the various kinds of living beings? What community of faculty can there be between the brightly colored lichen which so nearly resembles a mere mineral incrustation of the bare rock on which it grows, and the painter, to whom it is instinct with beauty, or the botanist, whom it feeds with knowledge?" Again he says: "Picture to yourselves the great Finner whale, hugest of beasts that live or have lived, disporting his eighty or ninety feet of bone, muscle, and blubber, with easy roll, among waves in which the stoutest ship that ever left dockyard would founder hopelessly, and contrast him with the invisible animalcules, — mere gelatinous specks, multitudes of which could, in fact, dance upon the point of a needle with

the same ease as the angels of the schoolmen could, in imagination. With these images before your minds, you may well ask, What community of form or structure is there between the animalcule and the whale?" Yet he proceeds to demonstrate that "protoplasm, simple or nucleated, is the formal basis of all life. It is the clay of the potter; which, bake it and paint it as he will, remains clay, separated by artifice and not by Nature, from the commonest brick or sun-dried clod." Plasson-body or *Amœba* bounds the physical analysis of life, and Science has no ground for dissatisfaction with the extent of the domain thus opened to her.

When in his Belfast address Professor Tyndall said, "If you ask me whether there exists the least evidence to prove that any form of life can be developed out of Matter, without demonstrable antecedent life, my reply is that evidence considered perfectly conclusive by many has been adduced," — he was reviled as maintaining the doctrine of Spontaneous Generation. That doctrine, as already remarked, has not been at all generally accepted, but for the reason, not that it is inherently abhorrent or repulsive, but that the demonstration of the fact is not considered to be conclusive. Of course, from the point of view of those who regard Matter as separated altogether from Spirit, the demonstration of Abiogenesis would be disastrous; it would seem to establish Materialism impregably, and to expel Deity from the universe. But to those who hold that Matter and Spirit are merely terms given to different manifestations of one and the same fundamental reality, Bio-

genesis and Abiogenesis are alike conceivable and acceptable. For if what we call Spirit truly pervades what we call Matter, and is in the last analysis identical with the latter, it follows that the elimination of the spiritual from any form of generation, from any department of Biological Science, is as impossible as the bisection of one of Professor Tyndall's real molecules. Huxley has expressed the opinion that "in itself it is of little moment whether we express the phenomena of Matter in terms of Spirit, or the phenomena of Spirit in terms of Matter." This is, however, true only in a restricted sense. It does signify a great deal whether we use terms of Matter or terms of Spirit. It commonly makes all the difference between intelligibility and non-intelligibility, — and that assuredly is not of little moment.

Balzac does not give much help toward the explanation of details, but in dealing with the origin of life he had to do with a problem solved neither before nor since his time. Following his synthesis, nevertheless, it is possible to obtain a sufficiently clear idea of what he meant to convey and of what underlies his generalization. From the reference to and eulogies of Bichat, in the description of Louis Lambert's college life, it might be inferred that Balzac was indebted to that brilliant but short-lived physiologist for his axiom regarding the origin of life; but while he employs some of Bichat's doctrines to illustrate Lambert's intellectual reach and precocity, there is no ground for the belief that in framing the categories which embrace the final expressions

of that powerful mind, anything more is to be found of Bichat's than some fragments of his terminology. Bichat defined life as "*l'ensemble des fonctions qui résistent à la mort,*" — clearly an inexact and unfortunate definition; for adaptation, not resistance, is the controlling principle of life, — adaptation of the organism to its environment. Bichat imagined an inherent principle of resistance to the external forces which were hostile to life, and the extent of his real services to physiology cannot obscure the fact that in this part of his theory he was altogether astray. Balzac has used some of his terms, but in such a manner as to make it evident that he has not adopted the same fallacy. Action and Reaction are the agencies really postulated in Louis Lambert. Life, in fact, as described here, may be compared with a somewhat parallel passage in Lotze's "*Microcosmos.*" He is speaking of the body, of which he says: "*Its life is like an eddy produced in the bed of a stream by a peculiarly shaped obstacle. The general course of Nature is the stream, the organized body, the obstacle against which this breaks; and its peculiar shape converts the uniform and straight currents of the water into the strange windings and crossings of the whirlpool.*" Life, in other words, is not a stable condition, but one of continual flux and reflux. Broadly speaking, two principles or tendencies govern organic life, — the tendency of that life to indefinite and rapid increase; the tendency of external forces to check or stop such increase. But for the latter, the earth would speedily be overstocked with every kind of living crea-

ture; but for the former, every living creature would speedily succumb in the unequal struggle for existence. The equilibrium of life is unstable. The predominance of either of its dominant causes will overthrow it. This is the interpretation of Balzac's proposition, which is thus seen not to be discordant with the latest conclusions of science, but rather to transcend, and in transcending to harmonize and strengthen them. When Professor Tyndall ascribes all terrestrial vitality to the sun, the religious non-scientific mind revolts from what it regards as a purely mechanical and atheistic doctrine. It is true that the professor himself disclaims all pretence of understanding anything of final causes. "Science," he says, "knows nothing of the origin or destiny of Nature. Who or what made the sun, and gave his rays their alleged power; who or what made and bestowed upon the ultimate particles of matter their wondrous power of varied interaction? Science does not know; the mystery, though pushed back, remains unaltered." But Science is not so modest as these remarks imply. Her followers certainly have attempted to answer the questions put to her, and some of them from the standpoint of an alleged agnosticism indistinguishable from atheism. Balzac's cosmology, being primarily spiritual, is in no such need of provisos and apologies. Granted that what is called Matter includes Spirit or is Spirit under certain conditions, and it becomes not merely possible but easy to regard the sun as the immediate agent of terrestrial vitality, without yielding one jot or tittle of the spiritual hypothesis.

The Creative Will manifesting through Motion upon Matter and engendering life is a perfectly thinkable doctrine, and it possesses the advantage of representing the dual nature of the human mind in a perfectly harmonious synthesis.

“Nowhere,” proceeds Balzac, “is Motion sterile. Everywhere it engenders Number; but it may be neutralized by a superior resistance, as in minerals.” This axiom may be considered in conjunction with the following one: “Number, which produces all the varieties [of organic life], at the same time generates Harmony, which, in the highest acceptation, is the relation between parts and Unity.” The statement that Motion engenders Number refers to the molecular combinations whose numerical proportions determine the character of the resulting organism. Take, in illustration, the chemical composition of a *plasson*-body, which is the simplest living germ, a particle of matter without structure and organization, and absolutely homogeneous. It is in fact unorganized protoplasm, and therefore at the very beginnings of terrestrial vitality. Now, this *plasson*-body is composed as follows: In one hundred parts it has fifty-four of carbon, twenty-one of oxygen, sixteen of nitrogen, seven of hydrogen, and two of sulphur. Of course it is open to any one to object that the chemical analysis must have been made upon a *plasson*-body which had ceased to live, and that therefore it does not really show the composition of living protoplasm. Professor Huxley endeavors to meet this objection with the remark that, strictly speaking, we

do not and cannot know the composition of any bodies with exactness ; but the answer hardly meets the case, and it is obvious that the cessation of vitality may — and in the opinion of many, must — be followed by changes in the organism (prior to decomposition) which are liable to vitiate the conclusions founded on post-mortem analysis. At present, however, we are not concerned with that question. It is the relation of Number to organic variation with which we are dealing. Every combination of plasson-bodies is in fact a question of numbers. According to the proportions in which the groups of molecules which build up organisms are combined, is the character of the perfected organism. The same primary composition enters into all organic structures. Out of this simple protoplasmic substance, by numerical arrangement and combination, proceed the entire and enormous series of variations which in the first place determine the form and structure of the interior organs, and in the second place decide the species and character of the organism. With regard to what Balzac calls the neutralization of Motion in the mineral bodies, it is perhaps less complete than he supposed, for it is not now regarded as certain that what to the imperfect vision of the human eye appears a condition of absolute rest is really so.

The production of Harmony from the numerical arrangement of species and varieties is inevitable, for the Number spoken of is the Law which pervades all Nature, and by virtue of which order, regularity, and sequence exist. This Harmony, too, is the connecting

link, the *nexus*, between the Parts and Unity, as Balzac puts it. Thus from the operation of Motion upon Matter — for example, the Motion of the sun's rays — proceeds Life; and from the operation of Number upon the physical basis of Life proceeds organized vitality; and in the same way that Number which engenders vital organization and variation, evolves Harmony, which is the effect of Law. It is interesting to note the efforts of men of science who cannot accept the mechanical theory of the universe, to obtain a basis for a scheme of thought closely allied to Balzac's. Thus we find Professor Tait arguing from the biogenetical point of view in this manner: "If then the matter of this present visible universe be not capable of itself, that is to say, in virtue of the forces and qualities with which it has been endowed, of generating life, but if we must look to the unseen universe for the origin of life, this would appear to show that the peculiar collocation of matter which accompanies the operations of life is not a mere grouping of particles of the visible universe, but implies likewise some peculiarity in the connection of these with the unseen universe. May it not denote in fact some peculiarity of structure extending to the unseen?" There seems to be need for some clearer definition of the terms "visible" and "unseen" here; for a large proportion of the universe, with the phenomena of which Science deals freely, is as a matter of fact quite as much "unseen" as any conceivable abstraction could be. Indeed the whole atomic theory, the undulatory theory of light, the theory of gravitation, not to

speak of other problems of the first importance, involve the treatment of imponderable and invisible forces or substances, the postulation of which, however necessary, has been attended with difficulties the insoluble character of several of which testifies to the existence of an incertitude hardly to be exceeded by the most daring speculations concerning what Professor Tait not infelicitously terms the "unseen universe."

The seventh axiom derives from the preceding ones: "Without Motion all would be one and the same substance. Its products, identical in their essence, are differentiated only by the Number which determines faculties (or properties)." Probably one of the first speculations of the human mind had reference to the intimate connection between Motion and Life and between apparent absolute Rest and Death. There is no cosmical theory, however ancient, which does not postulate the vitalization of matter in a state of rest by the introduction to it of Motion. Five hundred years before the beginning of the Christian era Anaxagoras was engaged in such a speculation. He imagined Space to be filled with a chaotic mass of stagnant, lifeless substances. Then Mind began to work upon it, communicating Motion, which in turn engendered Order. Anaxagoras is entitled to the credit of initiating the vortical theory also; for according to him the operative Mind communicated a revolving motion at a single point. Half a century later Leucippus promulgated an extension of this theory which offered a closer analogy to the modern nebular hypothesis, for Leucippus filled

his space with atoms. But whatever the nature of the superstructure, this has always been a fundamental postulate: that Motion is the force by which Matter is vivified and differentiated. Balzac, with Zenocrates and others, gives to Number the function of differentiation; and with reason, whether we regard the attribution exoterically or esoterically. Modern Science depends largely upon Numbers for its activity and progress. In fact it could effect nothing without them. It also encounters in its research many curious and hitherto inexplicable laws of Nature, which appear to assign certain particular numbers to certain kingdoms of animal, vegetable, or other life. Thus in a recent treatise on "The Origin of Floral Structures" by Rev. George Henslow, five Principles of Variation in flowers are specified, and of these Number is the first and most important. Now, Dr. Henslow has observed that certain numbers appear to be preferred by Nature in the floral kingdom. The numbers three and five (as applied to floral whorls) appear to dominate all others; the numbers seven and eleven are very rare; and so on. The rational inference of course is that the external agencies which produce or assist variation operate most easily in such ways as tend to development in the prevailing numerical method, and this involves a similar special facility of development in these lines for the plant itself. But *why* it should be easiest for flowers to vary in these particular numerical ways, Science is quite unable to explain. Some of the ancients supposed that the atoms themselves were animated and possessed

of conscious intelligence. This was only shifting, not removing, a difficulty, though the old method of solving hard problems has by no means lost its attraction through lapse of time. It is, however, as Balzac puts it, essentially upon Number that differentiation depends; specific collocations of atoms or molecules in definite proportions determining the functions, properties, and faculties of every material organism. Motion acting upon Matter produces Life. Number operating upon animated Matter decides what kind of living thing shall result from organization. Number without Motion would effect nothing. Matter without Motion would be homogeneous and exanimate. Motion without Number could only vivify, but could not co-ordinate. But Motion never acts alone. As Balzac says, 'it everywhere engenders Number, and thus it is in a way Number in action. Motion originates Life, and Number utilizes it by ordering its manifestations. Thus is produced that Harmony which is spoken of as the relation between the Parts and Unity, — which is of necessity the Whole.

The eighth axiom is brief, but not on that account easy of comprehension: "Man is related to faculties; the Angel is related to essence." Human life is the result of the descent of Spirit into Matter. In this phase of existence the higher entity is "subdued to what it works in." It cannot raise the coarser material elements to its own plane. It must consequently adapt itself to them, — to its environment, in short. Now, the animation of matter, as has been seen, is but one of a

number of processes, all of which are necessary to the production of that complex, many-sided Whole which we call Nature. Nature proceeds, in her turn, from the simple to the complex, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. Beginning with, as Science supposes, an indivisible unit of absolute simplicity; producing, as the ultimate cognizable reduction of animated matter, the structureless plasson-body; evolving from that every form of organic life,—she crowns her steadily increasing complexity of organization, function, and faculties with Man, the highest and at the same time the most elaborate of living beings. In saying that he is “related to faculties,” Balzac referred to the ever-growing necessity which controls the laboratory work of Nature, and compels her to devise more and better mechanism for the manifestation of Spirit as she climbs the evolutionary stairway. With each intellectual advance the cerebral convolutions must become more numerous, the afferent and efferent nerves be attuned to a greater delicacy of sensation, a greater rapidity of transmission. With the pressure of expanding spiritual needs there must develop corresponding physical instrumentalities. Even with the very highest attainable development on the human plane, such as culminates in a Shakspeare, the direction of evolution is of necessity related to faculties, not to essence; for even here we have only the best attainable adaptation of the material to the spiritual; and all that Nature can accomplish under these conditions is, by the laws of organic life, nothing but a compromise, the

attainment of temporary equilibrium between essentially antagonistic extremes. In this sphere of existence the principle of such partial and imperfect success as is alone attainable is formulated by modern science as adaptation to the environment. This involves the strengthening of the relation to faculties, since these are the means whereby adaptation is produced. The life of man, and indeed of all animals, is a continual struggle, and for the most part a struggle with needs and appetites belonging altogether to the material and physical plane. If, for instance, it were possible for mankind to live without eating and drinking,—if, that is to say, the normal waste of tissue could be stopped, the fires of life be kept burning without the consumption of fuel,—it cannot be doubted that all the aims and motives of the race would undergo the most radical and momentous change. At one stroke the fellest obstacle to the higher life would be cleared away, and the horizon of the world would be enlarged almost indefinitely. But as things are, no step upward can be taken without suffering, without direct or indirect concession and tribute to the lower but implacable needs of mere organic life. The fate of man is like that of the

“horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down,”

in the “Vision of Sin;” and however he may aspire, this destiny he must as a rule undergo. He is “related to faculties,” because it is the order of his present mode of existence. The experience and the suffering

which belong to incarnation are necessary to his perfection, and they must therefore be endured ; but such is not the scheme of the superior, enfranchised, angelic life.

Some may consider the introduction of angels to a philosophical speculation inconsistent ; for does not consideration of such hypothetical beings appertain to Theology and Poetry alone ? Balzac would undoubtedly have returned an emphatic negative to such a question, and would have denied the force of the objection ; and indeed thinkers whose claim to the title of Philosopher can never be disputed have established precedents in this connection which completely justify Balzac. Thus Locke observes : “ That there should be more species of intelligent creatures above us than there are of sensible and material below us, is probable to me from hence, that in all the visible corporeal world we see no chasms or gaps. . . . And when we consider the infinite power and wisdom of the Maker, we have reason to think that it is suitable to the magnificent harmony of the universe and the great design and infinite goodness of the Architect that the species of creatures should also, by gentle degrees, ascend upwards from us toward his infinite perfection, as we see they gradually descend from us downwards ; which if it be probable, we have reason then to be persuaded that there are far more species of creatures above us than there are beneath ; we being, in degrees of perfection, much more remote from the infinite being of God than we are from the lowest state of being, and that which

approaches next to nothing." This too is the thought expressed by Tennyson in "The Two Voices," —

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?"

The late Lord Lytton pursued the same line of thought in the following passage: "In the small as in the vast, God is equally profuse of life. The traveller looks upon the tree, and fancies its boughs were formed for his shelter in the summer sun or his fuel in the winter frosts. But in each leaf of these boughs the Creator has made a world; it swarms with innumerable races. Each drop of water in yon moat is an orb more populous than is a kingdom of men. Everywhere in this immense design Science brings new life to light. Life is the one pervading principle; and even the thing that seems to die and putrefy but engenders new life, and changes to fresh forms of matter. Reasoning then by evident analogy, — if not a leaf, if not a drop of water, but is, no less than yonder star, a habitable and breathing world, — nay, if even man himself is a world to other lives, and millions and myriads dwell in the rivers of his blood, and inhabit man's frame as man inhabits earth, common sense (if your schoolmen had it) would suffice to teach that the cir-

cumfluent infinite which you call space — the boundless Impalpable which divides earth from the moon and stars — is filled also with its correspondent and appropriate life.”

In the dogmatic terminology of evolutionary philosophy, the word “Anthropomorphism” has now for several years done duty as a club wherewith to beat down all manifestations of sympathy with true psychology. Many well-meaning but feeble spirits have been so coerced and overawed by the insolent arrogance of the champions of the mechanical theory of life, that they have not ventured to dispute the authority of *dicta* in all respects as imaginative as, and infinitely narrower and less noble than, the alleged “myths” against which they are directed. There is indeed no attitude which in the man of science ought to be more marked than Humility; for the history of human progress is staked out with the gravestones of exploded scientific fallacies, delusions, and follies. Notwithstanding these constant warnings and cautionary signals, the temptation to “cross the boundary of experimental evidence” and indulge in dogmatisms all the more positive because of their unstable foundation, appears too strong for a large proportion of the modern scientific leaders. What these men propound, no matter how derived or supported, is unfortunately accepted as infallible by the great majority of their followers,—and by the term “followers” is meant not only other men of science, but the crowd who take their opinions and beliefs habitually at second-hand, and to-day yield to the

pretensions of science and pseudo-science alike an obedience and a confidence formerly conceded only to the dogmatism of theology. Because of the materialistic influence thus disseminated, it becomes necessary, in dealing with any question which the canons of scientific orthodoxy declare beyond the limits of rational research, to adjure all readers to "clear their minds of cant," and prepare themselves for the candid consideration of whatever is set before them by reflecting that only fools will undertake to set bounds to the possibilities of existence and the variety of phenomena in the universe.

"The Angel," says Balzac, "is related to essence." That this should be so is, *ex hypothesi*, necessary and inevitable. The angel, being pure spirit, or relatively pure spirit, must approach essence in its constitution. The course of Man is from indefinite homogeneity to definite heterogeneity. But this constant increase in complexity is due entirely to the necessity of refining and perfecting the material mechanism through which Spirit manifests. Remove the material medium whose intractability and grossness necessitate so ingenious and varied a series of adaptations, and the need for all this planning and contriving at once ceases. The spiritual, the angelic composition, being free from the impediments of Matter, is simple; and its relations and tendencies are towards homogeneity, and away from heterogeneity. Moreover, supposing that there are, as analogy suggests, many degrees of spiritual perfection, it follows that the movement of all these beings

must be in the direction of Unity. The line of their progress is necessarily at variance with that of Humanity. The descent of Spirit into Matter — according to the Mystics, the true signification of the event exoterically figured as the Fall of the Angels — resulted in a struggle which has at one and the same time determined the direction of material evolution, and fixed the nature of the methods by which ultimately the enfranchisement of Spirit is to be attained. But whereas in the case of angelic development, the refinement of a comparatively simple and homogeneous essence is required, in the case of incarnated spirit the vehicle itself must be improved, purified, and perfected, to the end that the operative soul may not be hopelessly weighed down and impeded by it, in the fulfilment of that soul's destiny. It follows, from this line of reasoning, that the human soul, when liberated from its material envelope, must take up the evolutionary methods which, prior to the change called Death, were impossible to it. It does not, however, follow that such a change of method is immediate. *Natura non facit saltum* is no doubt the rule here, as in the visible universe. The Oriental wisdom-religion teaches that the process of restoring the once incarnated spirit to its high Source is a very gradual one, involving many reincarnations, during which the discipline and preparation of the soul consist in the difficult and painful work of subduing the strong material desires and impulses, and bringing the inner man into harmony with the Divine. In this process the already liberated angels may be engaged as

assistants to all who, like Faust, greatly struggle and unweariedly aspire.

“ Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,
Den können wir erlösen.”

The ninth axiom indeed brings us to cognate considerations: “By uniting his body to the elementary movement, Man may succeed in joining himself to the light interiorly (or by his Interior).” The superficial obscurity of the language here veils a doctrine which is fundamental in all religions, and vital to occult and mystical systems. The union of the body with the elementary movement signifies the preparation and purification of the physical organism by bringing it into harmony with that natural force which is commonly termed the vital principle. The method indicated involves a reversal of the normal material evolutionary process, and a substitution of the simple for the complex. It is by eliminating the tributes paid by advanced humanity to cultivated appetites that the body is by degrees attuned to the highest sympathies of phenomenal Nature, and thus becomes fitted to be the medium and vehicle of psychical efforts aimed at the attainment of spiritual and divine illumination. The preparation of the body by discipline of this kind can, however, effect no more than to facilitate the subsequent psychical operations, which must be carried on, as Balzac says, by the Interior, — that is to say, by Intuition. Now, modern mechanical science has labored so strenuously to discredit this faculty in the interest of purely materialistic philosophy, that it is in a manner

necessary to call in the testimony of some established authority on its behalf. The place of Intuition is thus defined by Locke: "Our highest degree of Knowledge is intuitive, without Reasoning;" and this intuitive knowledge, he says, "is certain, beyond all doubt, and needs no probation, nor can have any, this being the highest of all human certainty." And he says again: "In the discovery of and assent to these truths, there is no use of the discursive faculty, no need of reasoning; but they are known by a superior and higher degree of evidence. And such, if I may guess at things unknown, I am apt to think that angels have now, and the spirits of just men made perfect shall have in a future state, of thousands of things which now either wholly escape our apprehensions, or which, our short-sighted reason having got some faint glimpse of, we in the dark grope after." Elsewhere the same author says of Intuition: "This kind of knowledge is the clearest and most certain that human frailty is capable of. This part of knowledge is irresistible, and, like bright sunshine, forces itself immediately to be perceived, as soon as ever the mind turns its view that way, and leaves no room for hesitation, doubt, or examination, but the mind is presently filled with the clear light of it. It is on this intuition that depend all the certainty and evidence of all our knowledge." Intuition, then, according to Locke, comes first, and Reason second, — a classification so repugnant to modern Materialism that it would, were it possible, repudiate Locke altogether, rather than accept a conclusion which in its

final analysis involves the subordination of Matter to Spirit.

And now let us hear a modern Mystic on the definition of the faculty which has been and continues to be the subject of fierce contention among rival schools of thought. We quote from "The Perfect Way:." "It is that mode of the mind whereby, after exercising itself in an outward direction as Intellect, in order to obtain cognition of phenomena, it returns towards its centre as Intuition, and by ascertaining the essential idea of the fact apprehended by the senses, completes the process of its thought. And just as only by the combined and equal operation of the modes termed centrifugal and centripetal, of force, the solar system is sustained; so only by the equilibrium of the modes, intellectual and intuitional, of the mind, can man complete the system of his thought and attain to certitude of truth. And as well might we attempt to construct the solar system by means of an exercise of force in one direction, the human system by means of one sex, or the nervous system by means of the motor roots only, as to attain to knowledge by means of one mode only of mind. It is, however, precisely in this manner that the materialistic hypothesis errs; and by its error it has forfeited all claim to be accounted a system." Intuition, in fact, is the key whereby the interior region of the mind, the permanent, enduring part of human nature, is unlocked; it is the instrument by which the deep, the central truths of existence, known in perpetuity to the Soul herself, are attained to by the intelli-

gence. For according to the Mystics, whose teaching Balzac follows here, the Soul, appointed to pass through a long series of incarnations, gathers together and preserves her experiences in Matter, and can and will communicate them when the conditions are favorable; that is to say, when through the purifying discipline of the body the Intellect is so clarified and refined as to be capable of communion with and apprehension of the central Psyche. It is thus that man may succeed in joining himself to the Light by his Interior. The Light is the illumination of the inner sanctuary, — that sanctuary to which reference was made in the words, “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you.”

It is thus, too, that the final redemption — the escape of Spirit from Matter — is to be brought about. The pursuit of a materialistic philosophy and science, by stifling all elevating psychical effort, retards the only form of progress which is worth achieving. For it compels a one-sided development, and what is worse, a development of that side of human nature which is least deserving of culture. “What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” is the problem now forced upon the race by the character and tendencies of the dominant civilization. The present exaltation of Reason at the expense of Intuition is directly in the line of soul perdition, or soul paralysis; for though the immortality of the soul may be predicated, its connection with Matter may be indefinitely prolonged, its return to its ineffable Source be as indefinitely delayed, by such a materialization of its

mundane medium as will render effective psychical manifestation and guidance impracticable, thus delivering over the Man himself to the blind leadership of the Senses and the Intellect alone. Such a postponement of the soul's enfranchisement cannot be submitted to. All the higher forces of the universe are banded against the materialist conspiracy; and the strong reaction against that futile and degrading doctrine even now manifesting itself wherever the English language is spoken, and not only in those countries, but among the Celts, Iberians, and Slavs, indicates the beginning of an era during which the leading races will revolt from the nullifications of the hour, and once more interest themselves seriously in an enlightened, elevating, and comprehensive psychology.

The future science of Soul must accord recognition to the Intuitional without discarding the Rational. In the past progress has been hindered by efforts to enthrone one of these faculties at the expense of the other. No error could have been more mischievous. It has kept mankind oscillating between the poles of Credulity and Scepticism. It has arrayed the strongest intelligences in opposed phalanxes, and so prejudiced either faction as to render all compromise but that of coercion or hypocrisy impracticable. There was always a safe middle ground, but antagonisms were always too fierce to permit of its being taken. Nor was the situation improved by the introduction of dogma on both sides, — that of theology on the side of Intuition, and that of physical science on the side

of Reason. All the smoke and dust of age-long intellectual conflict has been bequeathed with other attributes, prejudices, and proclivities, from generation to generation. We approach the arena heavily weighted in advance. Heredity has handicapped us, and we need all the help we can obtain, all the encouragement to be derived from conviction of the want of enlightenment, to render us fit for the task to the accomplishment of which we are called. Among the first necessities of the new era will be the restoration of the faculty of Intuition to its normal and legitimate rank and position; and following naturally upon this restoration will come recognition of the truth that the one and only way by which to effect union with the higher Light, to put the race in the path which leads to final emancipation and regeneration, is through the cultivation of that interior psychical aptitude which has been permitted almost to die out in most of us.

The tenth axiom is as follows: "Number is an intellectual witness which belongs only to Man, and by which he may arrive at the knowledge of the Word." Before proceeding to consider this it seems necessary to point out that in the wisdom-religion Number has two distinct significations, and that the deeper of these cannot be communicated, nor indeed understood save by those whose studies have prepared them for the assimilation of an occult symbology which in the very nature of things must be "caviare to the general." Nor is there any charlatanic affectation of mystery in this. No man supposes himself capable of reading Sanscrit with-

out preliminary study in the language. No man thinks it reasonable that he should be able to read music at sight, never having learned its notation. To the uninstructed the apparatus of a chemical laboratory or an astronomical observatory conveys no information, and is incomprehensible. In precisely the same way it is necessary that the occult theory of Numbers should have been studied before the meaning of references to that theory can be grasped. In a popular exposition of Balzac's profound system of philosophy it is manifestly impracticable to attempt more than such an exoteric outline of the subtler expressions as may serve to show the possibility and the tendency of the more recondite allusions. Even so the necessity of employing terms which often bear quite different significations according as they are used exoterically or esoterically renders it impossible to guard against the liability to misconception. The external interpretation of Balzac's statement here is by no means easy, moreover, since even that presupposes a familiarity with certain little-understood matters. The knowledge of the Word, which is to be arrived at with the aid of Number, is knowledge of the phenomena and laws of Nature, for one thing. The Word referred to is the Logos manifested in the material universe. The Logos in itself — the Ain-Soph of the Kabbalists — is beyond the comprehension of minds limited by Matter. It can only be known at all through its manifestation. Number, the intellectual witness which belongs only to Man, — that is to say, the instrument by which he is enabled to follow and apprehend the

organization and differentiation of Matter by Motion, — brings him into relations with the material universe which illuminate the structure and conditions of the latter. In the lower and more restricted signification of Number this is shown to be true by the character of the instrumentalities to which Science is indebted for its greatest advances. The physicist, the chemist, the mathematician, the astronomer, the biologist, the botanist, are all and equally dependent upon Number for progress in discovery and the classification of phenomena. This is not all that Balzac signifies in the tenth axiom, but it is all that can be made intelligible to the average reader, and probably all that the average reader cares to know. Number, then, is the key to the mysteries of the visible (and indeed also to the unseen) universe. It is the exponent of Nature's laws; and whether it shall unfold those laws completely depends upon the ability of those who employ it to see not alone its Material but its Spiritual aspects and attributes. Recognizing only the former, they may attain to the highest plane upon which purely materialistic science can live; and they will undoubtedly believe, having reached that height, that there are no more practicable elevations to conquer. At such a stage the temptation is to postulate the futility of further exploration, to label the horizon "Unknowable," and to "rest and be thankful." A saner, better-balanced ambition recognizes no impassable limits, but when the boundaries of the Material are approached prepares to call in aid those higher and more refined Spiritual capacities to

which there are no limitations short of union with the Infinite.

“There is a Number which Impurity cannot transcend, the Number wherein creation is finished.” So reads the eleventh axiom; and again it has to be said that the most weighty significance of this sentence is esoteric. The Impure, or Impurity, refers to that complete immersion in Matter which has the effect of paralyzing or even stifling the spiritual elements. To all who have sunk so far, comprehension of the occult side of existence is debarred. They occupy a position towards the higher life analogous to that which a man born blind and deaf occupies toward light and sound. They are as incapable of rising out of Matter as a person congenitally wanting in a limb or organ would be of performing the functions of the missing parts. But there is another, — a dual interpretation to this axiom. The Number which symbolizes the end of creation is also the Number which marks the return of all created things to the bosom of Infinity. The allusion is to the Hindu cosmology, according to which at stated intervals (*manvantaras*) all that exists materially is resolved into its constituent essence, in much the same way as if, reversing the processes of the nebular hypothesis, this universe should be resolved into the “naked essence floating free” out of which it is assumed to have been gradually evolved. Not that there is any chasm between ancient and modern science in regard to this problem. The West joins the East in the belief that a time must come, however remote, for the dissolution

of our universe ; and the destiny before it is, in the opinion of modern science, to all practical intents identical with that postulated by the Hindu cosmogonists many thousands of years ago.

As a rather curious and interesting illustration of this similarity in conclusions reached, it need hardly be said, by radically different paths, a citation from Mr. Herbert Spencer may be worth giving : "Motion as well as Matter being fixed in quantity, it would seem that the change in the distribution of Matter which Motion effects, coming to a limit in whichever direction it is carried, the indestructible Motion thereupon necessitates a reverse distribution. Apparently the universally coexistent forces of attraction and repulsion which, as we have seen, necessitate rhythm in all minor changes throughout the universe, also necessitate rhythm in the totality of its changes, — produce now an immeasurable period during which the attracting forces predominating cause universal concentration, and then an immeasurable period during which the repulsive forces predominating cause universal diffusion, — alternate eras of Evolution and Dissolution." That is in the main sound Hindu cosmology, whether or not Mr. Spencer studied Hindu philosophers before writing it ; and few will incline to the opinion that the likeness in speculation is other than unconscious. *Pralaya* and *Manvantara*, however, — Dissolution and Evolution, — come to very much the same thing in the end ; and while it is perfectly evident that Number must have as much to do with the finish as with the beginning of creation, it is equally

clear that in the former case conditions and periods are involved which can only be comprehended and perceived by a highly developed Spiritual sense. The Physics no less than the Metaphysics of the universe are beyond the reach of the Impure ; of those, that is to say, who have lost the instinct of sympathy with the Real, and who squander their often splendid intellectual energies in closing against themselves more and more tightly the rifts through which, but for their suicidal perversity, enough light would filter to guide their erring feet back to firm ground.

“Unity,” says Balzac, in the twelfth axiom, “has been the point of departure for everything which was produced ; thence have resulted composites, but the end must be identical with the beginning. Hence the spiritual formula : Composite Unity, variable Unity, fixed Unity.” This formula applies to the entire created Universe, and to the whole body of phenomena, spiritual and material alike. No matter what theory of secondary causes be entertained, it will, if not nakedly atheistic, harmonize with this succinct proposition. The most ancient no less than the most modern philosophy, moreover, points to the conclusion that the line of progress in Nature is that of a closed curve, which, proceeding from the Absolute or Supreme Cause, returns ultimately to its origin. The Supreme Cause may doubtless manifest in conceivable and inconceivable ways ; but the human mind is so constituted as to be incapable, in its normal state, of apprehending other than material manifestations. The limits of the human mind are of

course not necessarily those of incarnated spirit; for, given other material conditions, — other collocations of atoms, other planetary states, — and it is quite possible to conceive of thinking beings widely differing in form from the human race, and gifted with far other faculties and functions. All we can say is that the telluric conditions have been such as to make us what we are; for we know that the law of existence is adaptation to the environment. The compounds into which the primordial substance have been separated do not, however, speak to us of a blind necessity. If forms of life are largely dependent upon cosmical states and phases of planetary development, the fact does not argue a failure of omnipotence or omniscience. It merely suggests views of the scheme of Divine manifestation so overpowering in their range and implications as to emphasize the narrow limitations of finite intelligence.

In the study of the Microcosm, however, we may gather analogies which will help us to a clearer comprehension of the Macrocosm. The relations of the soul to the body resemble in many respects those of the Deity to the Universe. The body is necessary to the manifestation of spirit on the physical plane. But what *is* the body? Assuredly, it is not the homogeneous structure it is commonly taken to be. It is a concourse of organized atoms in strongly differentiated groups, combined but ephemerally, in a continual state of flux, undergoing substitution and renewal so long as life continues. As Lotze puts it: "The

governing soul, placed at a favored point of the organism, collects the numberless impressions conveyed to it by a host of comrades." It directs their more important movements, through the nervous system. The automatic functions are performed unconsciously, as if the duty of discharging those functions were impressed upon the molecules with the act of organization which determines their activities. So, too, Nature has her automatic functionings, — "blind forces" they are sometimes called, — which, however, operate with the precision and effectiveness of ordered mechanism, and are only vague and irregular in our eyes because our field of vision is so narrow and our mental capacity so small. Composite Unity is clearly the first step in its manifestation, the first consequence of the descent of Spirit into Matter; variable Unity is the necessary sequence of Composition. For Nature is never at rest. Organic life is a process of combustion resulting in the constant transformation of Matter into Energy, and the equally constant reactionary change. Hence the necessity for ceaseless adjustments, which are always effected, though often not without violent local perturbations. Life is Mutation, in one sense; and the whole creation is incessantly moving toward new combinations of Matter and new lines of Spiritual experience and development. As the Earth Spirit chants in Goethe's immortal poem: —

"In Lebensfluthen, in Thatensturm
Wall' ich auf und ab,
Webe hin und her!
Geburt und Grab,

Ein ewiges Meer,
Ein wechselnd Weben,
Ein glühend Leben,
So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit,
Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid."

Yet Nature is more than the garment of Deity ; it is the body through which the Supreme manifests. As it flows into composition and variation, proceeding from the simple to the complex, raising and refining its combinations in the organic kingdoms, so it takes on a general direction which, through the steady operation of cosmic laws, must eventually — after what elevation of the higher organisms embraced within the system is beyond the conception of the present race — reach a point at which the same tendencies and laws which have completed this phase of Evolution must resolve the universe into its constituent elements. Mr. Herbert Spencer was cited recently in support of a view which modern science may be said to have generally adopted. It is fitting that a philosopher who does not take refuge in the Unknowable should also be heard on this point. Lotze, it will be observed, goes further than Mr. Spencer, and 'the difference is significant : "There may," he says, "be protracted periods during which the frame of the universe, unaltered in its main outlines and in the nature of its elements, goes through a long course of internal movements, by which it gradually realizes all the potentialities of manifold development conceivable within the limits of the fundamental adjustment. But after these have been gone through,

the One, which did not in a thousand moments appear a thousand times, but brought together the thousand forms of its existence into the unity of a single development, in which each stage is a condition of the next, — the One, we repeat, thus quickened and in the full tide of advance, will not go back to its former beginning. This age of the world will be brought to a close, and the velocity and direction of the formative motion with which the cause of the universe reaches that termination will compel it to give in a fresh creation a remodelled form to the immutable, but by dint of constant development deepened and ennobled, meaning of its being. A new adjustment of conditions will hold good in this age. Other substances, newly distributed functions, forces, and affinities, another kingdom of generic forms, and hitherto unknown types of life under new external conditions of existence, will repeat the imperishable theme as in a characteristically connected variation." It will be perceived that this is a far broader view than that of Mr. Spencer, and it may be pointed out that it closely resembles the Hindu theory of the Days and Nights of Brahma. That which the German psychologist prefigures is the Night of Brahma, in which, one phase of Evolution having been brought to a close, *Pralaya*, or Dissolution, ensues, and a pause in phenomenal existence precedes the dawn of a new creation on a higher plane of development.

"The universe" — so runs the thirteenth axiom — "is, then, variety in Unity. Motion is the means, Number is the result. The end is the return of all

things to Unity, which is God." This is the logical conclusion of the whole line of reasoning, as herein set forth. The analogies between Balzac's doctrine and both the oldest and the newest cosmic hypotheses have been exhibited as clearly as possible. Many illustrations might have been added, no doubt, but only at the risk of wearying the reader, who will probably be satisfied with an exposition which removes the most perplexing obscurities from the text. The steady and ordered development of the author's philosophy has, it may be hoped, been sufficiently kept in view. The two remaining axioms treat of Number in its broader spiritual relations and significations. They may be taken together: "Three and Seven are the two great spiritual numbers. Three is the formula of the created worlds. It is the *spiritual* symbol of creation, as it is the *material* symbol of circumference. In effect, God has proceeded only by circular [curved?] lines. The straight line is an attribute of Infinity; therefore man, who adumbrates the Infinite, employs it in his works. Two is the number of generation. Three is the number of existence, which includes generation and its product. Add the Quaternary, and you have Seven, which is the formula of Heaven. God is above all. He is Unity." In considering Number as treated in the earlier part of Louis Lambert's categories, something was said concerning the symbolic use of figures; but it may be advisable to extend the explanations already given a little at this point. It cannot have been overlooked that the number Three plays an im-

portant part in Balzac's whole system of thought. He postulates three worlds, three great divisions of humanity, three grades of spiritual development, three cults, three principal vehicles or agencies of the Divine manifestation. In all this he but follows the teachings of the wisdom-religion and of all who have, whether intelligently or mistakenly, sought to found special schools and departments of knowledge upon its mystical scriptures and their commentaries. No doubt an exoteric interpretation of what are called the Sacred Numbers can be derived from the phenomena of the visible world. But if we go back to the earliest ages of which any authoritative record remains, we shall still find the number Three invested with peculiar symbolic significance. Thus the Accadians divided the universe into three zones, presided over by three gods; and throughout the historical period the same number has been employed in the highest religious symbology. It is unnecessary to refer to the position it occupies in Christianity, but it was no less indispensable to the faith of the ancient Egyptians, and the systems of the Greek geometrical philosophers. According to Balzac it is the spiritual symbol of Creation, which is the joint product of Motion, the Logos, and Number, speaking esoterically. It is also the symbol of Existence; for it embraces the ideas of the Supreme Cause, who is Life and Substance, or duality in unity, and the product of these, which is the Word or Logos, the creative principle. Also it represents the complementary masculine and feminine principles, with their offspring; and the

triple category of evolution, Material, Spiritual, and Divine. Of the manifold occult meanings of the triad, it is perhaps inopportune to speak at greater length. The quaternary or tetrad is accorded a high value in all esoteric teachings, and for some reasons which are obvious enough to form the basis of one of those fallacies with which the super-subtlety of the Greeks sometimes confused them. Seven has always been a sacred number. Its spiritual significance is recognized both in the Old and New Testaments. It is the chief among symbols, in fact, and enters largely into all theogonies, and all systems of magic. In employing it as the formula of Heaven, Balzac has only followed all esoteric writers and teachers; and it must suffice to add that those who have more than a superficial acquaintance with these studies know that the position is justified.

This is the conclusion of the categories. It is not asserted that the whole meaning of all of them has been given in these pages. In the nature of the case that could not have been done; for, as previously intimated, there are certain symbolisms employed by Balzac the understanding of which demands just as much education in an abstruse department of knowledge as does that of the higher mathematics. There is no mystery about the matter. Where mystery really exists all external expression is debarred, in fact. Whoever will take the trouble to study the subjects can by some painstaking learn all that Balzac intended to convey. The most generally interesting part of his doctrine,

however, is explained here, and with a fulness sufficient to direct such readers as are enough interested in the topics discussed to follow up the curious speculations of the author. Perhaps it may be worth while to add a few words on the general significance of "Louis Lambert." An attempt has been made to show that Balzac had thought out for himself a philosophy which, when carefully and dispassionately examined, appears to unite in a very striking way many of the tenets of the old wisdom-religion with many of the most firmly held working hypotheses of modern Science. Beyond this, Balzac had formulated a theory of the Will which resumed the fundamental principles of all the schools of occultism and all the esoteric teachings of Oriental schools, and which, moreover, anticipated the most important recent advances in the domain of animal magnetism. Now, what lends particular interest to this Will theory of Balzac's is the fact that he was not compelled to seek his evidence at second-hand when dealing with the problems of Volition and Intuition. He obtained the phenomena upon which he based his conclusions from his own experience; and this is a circumstance of the first consequence, for the reason that he was a man in whom the faculty of Intuition and the Will-power were abnormally developed. Other great writers have been endowed with large Intuition, but no other united Intuition and Volition in anything like the same proportions. To him, when he was making literature, the relations of the Subjective and Objective were

very literally and completely reversed. The case of William Blake, the painter, is the only one on record which can be compared with this one. Blake could so objectify his subjective impressions as to be able at will to evoke the image of a sitter and paint a portrait from that image. Balzac went further even than that. He so vitalized and materialized his subjective creations that they became to him absolutely indistinguishable from living men and women. More than this: he possessed the peculiar power of fitting his subjectively produced people with exactly the characters adapted to their external appearance; and having once endowed his air-drawn bodies with equally air-drawn minds, they proceeded to act, speak, and reason precisely as actual human beings might have done, not only without prompting from, but often very much to the astonishment of, their creator. This last peculiarity Balzac shared with Dickens, Thackeray, and doubtless other men of genius; and to it the world owes, in great part, that singularly impressive vitalism which characterizes nearly all his fiction. It is in fact the crowning effect of the true creative gift; and what is far more important, it is a psychical phenomenon which is calculated to illuminate some of the most deep and difficult of psychological problems. The experience and testimony of a man gifted as Balzac was must be of the strongest interest to all who are open-minded enough to hold their Materialism provisionally, and who are candid enough to welcome even a possibility of demonstrating the independent

entity of Mind and Spirit, and the predominance (consequent upon this) of the Spiritual in the realm of Realities. Nor should it be forgotten that while Balzac is an indubitably strong witness on behalf of the genuineness, independence, and trustworthiness of Volition and Intuition, his evidence by no means stands alone, but simply supplements and reinforces a great body of doctrine supported on a great body of phenomena, which has been handed down through the ages in an unbroken succession, and has never failed to receive the indorsement and approval of many strong intelligences in each generation.

It would be inexcusable to close this examination of "Louis Lambert" without referring to a work which, when any speculations on the Will are under discussion, must inevitably be considered. There is no direct evidence that Balzac was acquainted with the writings of Schopenhauer, and the indirect evidence is against the probability of such knowledge. It is true that Schopenhauer's great work was published in 1818; but that signifies little, since it was hardly at all known twenty years later, and certainly had not been translated into French when "Louis Lambert" was written. There are undoubted analogies between Balzac and Schopenhauer, but they are explicable by the fact that both writers drew inspiration from the same source; namely, the philosophies and sacred books of the East. Schopenhauer's indebtedness to the Upanishads is frankly and frequently declared by him. Indeed his entire scheme of thought rests upon Hindu foundations; only parts of

the superstructure are Western, and where he has departed most widely from Oriental philosophy he has reasoned the least cogently. The fundamental principles of "The World as Will and Idea" are purely Indian; for though the doctrine of the world as Idea may be found in Heraclitus and other Greek philosophers, there can be no doubt that it was derived from India in the first place. Schopenhauer holds it as an *a priori* truth; for he says: "It is the expression of the most general form of all possible and thinkable experience, — a form which is more general than time, or space, or causality, for they all presuppose it; and each of these is valid only for a particular class of ideas; whereas the antithesis of object and subject is the common form of all these classes, is that form under which alone any idea of whatever kind it may be, abstract or intuitive, pure or empirical, is possible and thinkable. No truth therefore is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, — that all that exists for knowledge, and therefore this whole world, is only object in relation to subject, perception of a perceiver, in a word, idea." Kant analyzed phenomena, and showed their illusiveness. He penetrated below phenomenal existence and recognized as the immanent reality what he termed the *ding an sich*, — the "thing-in-itself." What the thing in itself was, however, he did not attempt to determine; in effect it was the Unknowable for him. Schopenhauer went further, and boldly postulated Will as the thing-in-itself, as the essence of all things, as the cause and the maintainer of

life. Thus he says: "Will is the thing-in-itself, the inner content, the essence of the world. Life, the visible world, the phenomenon, is only the mirror of the will. Therefore life accompanies the will as inseparably as the shadow accompanies the body; and if will exists, so will life, the world, exist. Life is therefore assured to the will to live; and so long as we are filled with the will to live we need have no fear for our existence, even in the presence of death." Of course what is here referred to is Life in general, the life of the race, not that of the individual. It must also be pointed out that when Schopenhauer speaks of the Will he means much more than the individual will. It is not only conscious volition; it is also that which has been termed blind force. In his essay on "Will in Nature," he thus speaks of it: "This *will*, far from being inseparable from, and even a mere result of, *knowledge*, differs radically and entirely from, and is quite independent of, knowledge, which is secondary and of later origin, and can consequently subsist and manifest itself without knowledge,—a thing which actually takes place throughout the whole of Nature, from the animal kingdom downwards;" and, he proceeds, "this *will* being the one and only thing in itself, the sole truly real, primary, metaphysical thing in a world in which everything else is only phenomenon, — *i. e.* mere representation, — gives all things, whatever they may be, the power to exist and to act;" and he concludes this definition by affirming that "we are never able to infer absence of will from absence of knowledge; for the will

may be pointed out even in all phenomena of unconscious Nature, whether in plants or inorganic bodies: in short, the will is not conditioned by knowledge, as has hitherto been universally assumed, although knowledge *is* conditioned by the will." It is to be hoped that Schopenhauer knew what he meant himself by "unconscious will," though he does not undertake to expound the paradox; but it is scarcely to be hoped that in the absence of exposition any one else will understand it, and if it be objected to as simply unthinkable the objection will be hard to meet.

He however follows the Indian doctrine in holding that the will to live is the cause of the sorrow and suffering apparently inseparable from existence. What he calls the will to live may readily be identified with the *upadanas*, the *trishna*, the *tanha*, of the East; and while there is a broad divergence between his conclusions and those of his Oriental teachers, there is a curiously close resemblance between his language and theirs when speaking of the peace and consolation to be derived, — in the one case from the fruition of the Fourfold Path, in the other from the denial of the will to live. Buddhism may claim Schopenhauer as its own up to a certain point. Listen to one of the discourses of Sakya-Muni in evidence of this: "This, O monks, is the sacred truth of the origin of suffering: it is the thirst for being, which leads from birth to birth, together with lust and desire, which finds gratification here and there; the thirst for being, the thirst for pleasure, the thirst for power. This, O monks, is the sacred

truth of the extinction of suffering: the extinction of this thirst by complete annihilation of desire, letting it go, expelling it, separating one's self from it, giving it no room." Here we have clearly the will (or desire) to live postulated as the ground of suffering, and the denial of the will to live postulated as the sole effectual remedy for and relief from suffering, — which is life. This was the great discovery made by Sakya-Muni during his vigil beneath the sacred tree. This is what he declared when, in Sir Edwin Arnold's beautiful paraphrase, he announced : —

“ Many a House of Life
Hath held me, — seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;
Sore was my ceaseless strife !

But now,
Thou Builder of this Tabernacle, — Thou!
I know Thee! Never shalt thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken thy House is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it!
Safe pass I thence, — Deliverance to obtain.”

The extinction of the thirst of life by the annihilation of desire, the denial of the will to live, — these are the Eastern and the Western presentations of the same system of thought.

The place given by Balzac to the Will in “Louis Lambert” is apparently less important than the one

assigned to it by Schopenhauer. But it must be remembered that Balzac really neither rewrote nor reproduced his *Treatise on the Will*, and that all he has given in "*Louis Lambert*" is a fragment which, while it suggests much, leaves much unaccounted for. Here and there are indications — especially in the categories — which may be regarded as adumbrating a larger significance than is expressly warranted; as, for example, when he says that all varieties of animal form are derived from the combination of Will with Substance. Here, too, as was pointed out in dealing with the passage referred to, Balzac appears to be in accord with Schopenhauer in postulating unconscious will-power; and it may possibly be thought by some that this otherwise singular point of agreement indicates a knowledge of the German by the French author. But it is far more probable that Balzac, here as elsewhere, derived his doctrine from some of those Indian philosophies which with less boldness, but in the final analysis not less illogically than Schopenhauer, posit at some (however remote) point in their systems an exercise of will which can only be conceived of (if it can be conceived of at all) as unconscious. In any search for final causes the Unknowable must at last stop the inquest, simply because the conditioned and finite can by no possibility apprehend the unconditioned and Infinite. It is as well, however, to call a halt to futile speculation on the hither side of unthinkable propositions; and this truth Schopenhauer might have perceived more clearly, or acted upon with more satisfac-

tory results. Yet it must be said that no philosopher has been more strangely misunderstood than the mis-called Apostle of Pessimism. Because he held that this form of life was not worth living; because, in plainer terms, he took the ground which underlies Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity alike; because he asserted the impermanence and futility of phenomenal existence in common with the deepest thinkers the world has ever known, — he has been branded Pessimist. The characterization is emphatically Philistine, Materialist, shallow, and misleading; and the proof of this will not be difficult.

What is the state to which the discipline called by him “denial of the will to live” is represented as bringing those who successfully undertake the enterprise? This is Schopenhauer’s answer to that question: “He who has attained to the denial of the will to live, however poor, joyless, and full of privation his condition may appear when looked at externally, is yet filled with inward joy and the true peace of heaven. It is not the restless strain of life, the jubilant delight which has been suffering as its preceding or succeeding condition, in the experience of the man who loves life; but it is a peace that cannot be shaken, a deep rest and inward serenity, a state which we cannot behold without the greatest longing when it is brought before our eyes or our imagination, because we at once recognize it as that which alone is right, infinitely surpassing everything else, upon which our better self cries within us the great *sapere aude*. Then we feel that every grati-

fication of our wishes won from the world is merely like the alms which the beggar receives from life to-day that he may hunger again to-morrow; resignation, on the contrary, is like an inherited estate, it frees the owner forever from all care." If this is pessimism, it is curious that the doctrine is illustrated by Schopenhauer from the lives of the Christian saints, from Saint Francis of Assisi, from Madame Guyon, no less than from Buddhism and Brahmanism. And in the conclusion of his Fourth Book, on "The Assertion and Denial of the Will," he clearly intimates that nihilism is abhorrent to him, and that he believes in the reality and superiority of the condition which supervenes upon the denial of the will to live. "If," he says, "it should be absolutely insisted upon that in some way or other a positive knowledge should be attained of that which philosophy can only express negatively as the denial of the will, there would be nothing for it but to refer to that state which all those who have attained to complete denial of the will have experienced, and which has been variously denoted by the names ecstasy, rapture, illumination, union with God, and so forth; a state, however, which cannot properly be called knowledge, because it has not the form of subject and object, and is, moreover, only attainable in one's own experience and cannot be further communicated." That is to say, it is not knowledge, because it transcends knowledge, which latter is but one of the manifestations of the "will to live." Schopenhauer's real belief is, however, so clearly shown in the last sentences of the Fourth Book of "The World as

Will and Idea," that only the crassest materialism could ever have represented him as holding to annihilation. He has previously warned his readers against the very misconception most of them have fallen into, in pointing out that "the conception of nothing is essentially relative, and always refers to a definite something which it negatives." And again: "Every nothing is thought, as such, only in relation to something, and presupposes this relation, and thus also this something." He uses these words in concluding: "Thus, in this way, by contemplation of the life and conduct of saints, whom it is certainly rarely granted us to meet with in our own experience, but who are brought before our eyes by their written history, and, with the stamp of inner truth, by art, we must banish the dark impressions of that nothingness which we discern behind all virtue and holiness as their final goal, and which we fear as children fear the dark; we must not even evade it like the Indians, through myths and meaningless words, such as reabsorption in Brahma or the Nirvana of the Buddhists. Rather do we freely acknowledge that what remains after the entire abolition of will is *for all those who are still full of will* certainly nothing; *but, conversely, to those in whom the will has turned and has denied itself, this our world, which is so real, with all its suns and milkyways, is nothing.*" The words here emphasized by italics prove in the most conclusive manner the spirituality and the subtlety of Schopenhauer's philosophy. Those only can regard him as a true pessimist and as a believer in annihilation, who expose their own narrow

limitations by declaring that Buddhism is a pessimist religion, and that Nirvana means annihilation. And a single verse from the Dhammapada ought to settle that question: "He whose appetites are at rest, like steeds thoroughly broken in by the trainer, he who has put away pride, who is free from impurity, him thus perfect the gods themselves envy." As Oldenburg observes, in his *Life of Buddha*, the pious Buddhist "seeks Nirvana with the same joyous sense of victory in prospect with which the Christian looks forward to his goal,—everlasting life."

Thus we have seen that religion and philosophy concur in supporting certain definite conclusions which are doubtless repugnant to that hard Materialism whose manifestation characterizes the present course of the world, which are rebelled against by our lower elements instinctively and of necessity, yet which derive from their antiquity, universality, and acceptance by great minds (to adduce no other reasons) a certain weight and solemnity, a certain masterful solidity, appealing in no vague or doubtful way to what is highest and best in humanity. The doctrines we have followed in Balzac's story do not owe their main significance to the fact that they were advanced by that powerful mind. That fact indeed enhances their importance, for the reason that Balzac was strongly endowed with the lofty faculty of Intuition, and was thereby enabled to testify from his own experience to the truth and reality of many deep things demonstration of which is denied less gifted souls. But the chief consequence attaching to the philosophy here unfolded consists in its

unity with and relations to those venerable systems of thought which the Western world is now slowly learning to regard with something of the respect and attention they deserve. An endeavor has been made in this introduction to indicate some of the points of agreement between these hoary doctrines and the best-supported theories of modern physical science. In regard to the exponents of that science it may indeed be well to recall Schopenhauer's energetic and not uncalled-for protest: "Men," said the philosopher, "set themselves up for enlighteners of mankind, who have studied chemistry, or physics, or mineralogy, and nothing else under the sun; to this they add their only knowledge of any other kind, — that is to say, the little they may remember of the doctrines of the school catechism; and when they find that these two elements will not harmonize they straightway turn scoffers at religion, and soon become shallow and absurd Materialists." The criticism has not altogether ceased to be applicable, though it was written many years ago. It is of the more importance to bear in mind the fallibility, and often the incapacity, of men of science in regard to subjects outside the lines of their research, since for some time public opinion has reposed a dangerous confidence in this peculiarly modern form of dogmatism. The phrase "emancipated Reason" has no doubt an agreeable sound, and seems to suggest advance and at the same time liberation from error. But if Reason happens to be only one side of the human character, and if, moreover, it is the lower of two sides, of which the first and higher has been a good deal contemned during the

nineteenth century, it may very well prove in the end that the so-called emancipation of Reason is, strictly speaking, no more conducive to real progress than the amputation of one of a man's legs would be to locomotion.

In "Louis Lambert" Balzac outlined a philosophy which cannot be denied breadth and height, which gives full play to the most intrepid imagination, and which synthesizes the oldest and the newest of thoughts, both intuitional and scientific. It is indeed little more than the scaffolding of an edifice which the architect was unable to complete; but the design can be traced, and we are permitted to realize, by the help of inference, the appearance it would have presented when finished. It is perhaps of more value than many fragmentary creations, for we may be said to possess the whole of it in outline; and if we cannot hope to clothe this skeleton as the genius that planned it would have done, we are at least competent to follow the inspiration back to its source, and thus to substitute our own feebler, yet not perhaps less intelligible, representations of the principles involved and the truths conveyed, for the lucid and penetrating exposition of the Master. It is, too, a protest against Materialism, — a protest which the author carries even further in "Seraphita," the final volume of his philosophical trilogy, but which is enforced here with a power and a scope hardly to be surpassed.

GEORGE FREDERIC PARSONS.

LOUIS LAMBERT.



Et nunc et semper dilectæ dicatum.

LOUIS LAMBERT was born in 1797, at Montoire, a little town in the Vendômois, where his father carried on a tannery of no great importance, expecting to make him his successor. But the boy's inclinations for study, which early showed themselves, changed in a measure the father's plans. Moreover, the tanner and his wife cherished Louis as parents cherish an only son, and never thwarted him. The Old and New Testament fell into the child's hands before he was five years old, and that book, which contains so many books, decided his destiny. Did his infantine imagination comprehend the deep mysteries of Scripture? could it already follow the Holy Spirit in its path through the universe? or, was it merely fascinated by the romantic charms which abound in those poems of the Orient? did the child's soul in its first innocent sympathize with the sublime piety which hands divine have shed within the book? To some readers the following narrative will answer these questions.

One circumstance resulted from the boy's first study of the Bible : Louis begged and borrowed books throughout the little town ; obtaining them by that persuasive charm whose secret belongs to childhood and which no one is able to resist. Spending his whole time in reading, which was neither directed nor interfered with, he reached his tenth year. In those days substitutes for the conscription were difficult to obtain, and wealthy parents were in the habit of engaging them in advance, so as not to be without them when the draft was made. The poor tanners were unable, through poverty, to buy a substitute for their son, and to put him in the Church was the only other means the law allowed them by which to save him from the draft. They therefore sent him, in 1807, to his maternal uncle, the curate of Mer, another little town on the Loire, near Blois. This course satisfied both Louis's passion for knowledge and his parents' desire to save him from the frightful uncertainties of a soldier's life ; moreover, his studious tastes and his precocious intellect gave promise of future high distinction in the Church. After remaining three years with his uncle, an old and somewhat learned Oratorian, Louis left Mer early in 1811 to enter the college of Vendôme where he was maintained and educated at the expense of Madame de Staël.

Louis Lambert owed the protection of this celebrated woman to chance, a means by which Providence often smooths the way for neglected genius. To us, whose eyes seldom look below the surface of human events, such vicissitudes, so frequent in the lives of great men,

seem the result of mere material phenomena ; to most biographers the head of a man of genius shows above the masses as a fine flower attracts by its brilliancy the eye of a naturalist. The comparison applies to this event in the life of Louis Lambert, who, as a usual thing, spent the time his uncle allowed him for his holidays with his parents at Montoire. Instead of enjoying, as most school-boys do, the sweets of the *far niente*, so enticing at any age, he carried his books and a slice of bread into the woods where he could read and meditate, free from the remonstrances of his mother, to whom such persevering study was beginning to seem dangerous. True mother's instinct ! From this time reading became a species of hunger in Louis's soul which nothing appeased ; he devoured books of all sorts, — feeding indiscriminately on history, philosophy, physics, and religious works. He once told me that he had found unspeakable delight in reading dictionaries in default of other books, and I readily believed it. What scholar has not again and again found pleasure in searching out the meaning of some obscure substantive ? The analysis of a word, its conformation, its history, were to Lambert a text for revery, — but not the instinctive revery with which a child accustoms itself to the phenomena of life and strengthens its perceptions both moral and physical (an involuntary culture which, later on, bears fruit in the understanding and in the character) ; no, Louis seized upon facts and explained them to himself, after searching out their cause and their effect with the perspicacity of a savage. By one of those startling gifts which Nature sometimes

delights in bestowing, and which proved the idiosyncrasy of his own being, Louis, at the age of fourteen, was able to give fluent expression to ideas whose real depth and meaning were revealed to me only in after years : —

“ Often,” he once said to me in speaking of his reading, “ I have made delightful journeys embarked on a single word which bore me through the abysses of the past as an insect alighting on a blade of grass floats at the will of a current. Starting from Greece I have reached Rome, and traversed the extent of modern eras. What a glorious book might be written on the life and adventures of a word ! No doubt it receives many impressions from the events in whose service it is used ; it awakens different ideas, according to its surroundings ; but its real greatness appears when we consider it under the triple aspect of soul, body, and motion. The mere consideration of a word, even if we abstract its functions, its effects, its performances, is sufficient to launch us on a wide expanse of meditation. Are not most words dyed with the ideas they externally represent ? To what originating genius do we owe them ? If a vast intellect was needed for the creation of a single word, how old is human speech ? The assembling of letters, their form, the countenance, as it were, which they give to a word, present an accurate image (according to the character of each nation) of the unknown beings whose memory survives in us. Who shall explain to us philosophically the transition from sensation to thought, from thought to word, from the word to its hieroglyphical expression, from hiero-

glyphs to alphabet, from the alphabet to written eloquence, whose beauty lies in a train of images classed by rhetoricians, which are, as it were, the hieroglyphs of thought? May not the ancient picturing of human ideas configured by zoölogical forms have determined the earliest signs used in the East for the writing of language? May it not also have left, traditionally, certain vestiges to our modern tongues, all of which have caught up fragments of the primitive language of departed nations, — majestic and solemn language, whose majesty and solemnity decrease as societies grow older; whose sonorous echoes in the Hebrew Bible, still so beautiful in Greece, grow feebler through the progress of our successive civilizations. Is it to that first essence that we owe the mysterious spirit hidden in human speech? Is there not a species of visible rectitude in the word TRUTH? The terse sound of the word calls up an image of chaste nudity, of the simplicity of the True in all things. The very syllable breathes freshness. I take the formula of an abstract idea for my example, not wishing to express the problem by a word which might make it too easy to comprehend, — such for instance as the word *float*, which speaks clearly of the senses. So it is with other words; all are instinct with a living power derived from the soul which they send back to its source by the mysterious force of a marvellous action and reaction between word and thought, — like, as it were, a lover drawing from the lips of his mistress as much love as he presses into them. Words, by their mere aspect to the eye, vivify

in our brain the creations to which they serve as garments. Like other beings, they have their own place where alone their qualities can fully work and develop. But the subject is a science in itself." He paused and shrugged his shoulders as if to say, " We are too great, and yet too little."

Louis's passion for reading had been well nourished. His uncle owned from two to three thousand volumes. These treasures came from the pillage of abbeys and castles during the Revolution. The worthy man had been able as *prêtre assermenté* to cull the choicest works from the precious collections which were sold in those days by the weight. In three years Louis Lambert had assimilated the substance of all the books in his uncle's library that deserved study. The absorption of ideas through reading became in him a curious phenomenon; his eye took in seven or eight lines at a glance; his mind caught and appreciated their meaning with a swiftness equal to the action of the eye; often one word in a sentence was enough to give him the meaning of the whole. His memory was amazing, retaining with equal fidelity the thoughts acquired by reading and those which reflection or conversation suggested to him. In fact, he possessed all forms of memory, — for names, words, places, things, and faces. Not only could he recall objects at will, but he could see them again in his own mind, precisely the same in situation, vividness, and coloring as they were when he first beheld them. This power he applied equally to the intangible acts of the understanding. He recollected, to use his own saying,

not only the position of thoughts on the page of the book from which he took them, but also the workings of his own mind at distant periods. By an almost unheard-of privilege his memory was able to retrace the entire life and progress of his mind, from the earliest idea that dawned upon it to the last fruition of his thought; through dimness to lucidity. His brain, early subjected to the difficult mechanism of the concentration of human powers, drew from its own rich stores a crowd of images, wonderful for their reality and their vigor, with which he fed his mind during the process of his limpid contemplations.

“When it pleases me to do so,” he said in his peculiar language, to which the treasures of memory imparted a precocious originality, “I draw a veil before my eyes. I retire within myself and find a darkened chamber, where the events of nature reproduce themselves in purer forms than those under which they first appeared to my exterior senses.”

At twelve years of age his imagination, stimulated by the perpetual exercise of his faculties, was developed to a degree which enabled him to obtain such exact notions of things which he knew through reading only that the image imprinted on his mind could not have been more vivid had he seen them in reality, — whether he reached the result by analogy, or whether he were gifted with a species of second-sight by which he was enabled to embrace all nature.

“When I read of the battle of Austerlitz,” he one day said to me, “I saw all the incidents. The volleys

of cannon, the shouts of the combatants sounded in my ears and stirred my very entrails. I smelt the powder; I heard the tramp of horses and the cries of men; I saw the plain where the armed nations clashed together as though I stood on the heights of the Santon. The sight was awful to me, like a page of the Apocalypse."

When he thus put all his forces into reading he lost, to a certain extent, the consciousness of physical life; existing only through the all-powerful action of his inward organs, the compass of which was then immeasurably extended, — to use his own expression, he "left space behind him." But I will not anticipate the history of the intellectual phases of his life. I have been led, in spite of myself, to invert the order in which I ought to unfold the history of a man who carried all his action into thought, just as others put all their being into action.

A strong inclination led him toward the study of mysticism. "*Abyssus abyssum*," he said to me, "our mind is an abyss which delights in depths profound. As children, men, and dotards, we love mystery, under whatever form it comes." The predilection was fatal to him, — if indeed we may judge his life by ordinary standards, and measure his joys by our own or by the theories of social prejudice. This taste for "the things of heaven" (another of his phrases), this *mens diviniore*, was due perhaps to the influence of the first books which he read in his uncle's library. Saint Theresa and Madame Guyon were to him a continuation of the Bible, the first food of his adult intelligence, and they accus

*“Walking one day near the boundaries of the park,
she encountered the tanner’s son, dressed almost
in rags and absorbed in a book.”*



George, Can.

George, Can.

tomed him to those ardent reactions of the soul in which ecstasy is both a means and a result. This study, this taste, uplifted his heart, ennobled and purified it, gave him a thirst for the Divine nature, inspired him with delicate emotions that were almost feminine and which are instinctive in the souls of great men; possibly the sublimity of such men comes from the need of self-devotion which distinguishes womanhood, — carried by them into higher things. Thanks to his early impressions, Louis continued pure through his college life. This noble virginity of the senses had the effect, necessarily, of enriching the warmth of his blood and increasing the faculties of his mind.

Madame de Staël, banished to forty leagues from Paris, spent several months of her exile in a country-house near Vendôme. Walking one day near the boundaries of the park, she encountered the tanner's son, dressed almost in rags and absorbed in a book. The book happened to be a translation of "Heaven and Hell." In those days MM. Saint-Martin, de Gence, and a few other French writers, partly German, were the only men in the whole French empire who knew the name of Swedenborg. Madame de Staël, much astonished, took the book with the bluntness she affected in her questions, looks, and gestures; then, with a sudden glance at Lambert, she said: —

"Do you understand that?"

"Do you pray to God?" asked the child.

"Why — yes," she answered.

"Do you comprehend him?"

Madame de Staël was silent for a moment ; then she sat down beside Lambert and began to talk to him. Unfortunately my memory, though extensive, is far from being as faithful as that of my friend, and I have forgotten the conversation beyond the opening words. The meeting was of a nature to keenly interest such a woman as Madame de Staël. When she reached home she said little about it, despite the natural need of expression which, with her, often degenerated into loquacity ; but she was thoughtful and preoccupied. I have questioned the only person still living who remembers the incident, hoping to recover some of Madame de Staël's remarks, but he could only recall one sentence : " He is a Seer," she said, speaking of Lambert.

Louis never justified to the eyes of men the noble hopes he inspired in his protectress. The passing interest which she felt for him was thought to be a womanly caprice, a fancy peculiar to the artistic nature. Madame de Staël desired to save Louis Lambert from the Emperor and from the Church, and give him, she said, to the noble destiny that awaited him ; she believed that she had rescued a modern Moses from the flood. Before leaving the neighborhood she employed a friend, M. de Corbigny, then prefect of Blois, to put her Moses in due time into the college of Vendôme ; then, in all probability, she forgot him.

Entering college at the beginning of 1811, when he was fourteen, Lambert must have left it at the close of 1814, after finishing his course of philosophy. I doubt if he ever received any reminder of his benefactress dur-

ing those years ; unless it be considered a benefit to pay the board and tuition of a lad without considering his future, after taking him from a career where he might perhaps have found happiness. The circumstances of the period, and Louis Lambert's own nature, may sufficiently absolve Madame de Staël both for her carelessness and her generosity. The person selected by her to act as intermediary in her relations to the boy quitted Blois at the time the latter left college. Political events then happening explained and perhaps justified the indifference of this person to Madame de Staël's *protégé*. The author of "*Corinne*" heard no more of her little Moses. The hundred louis which she gave M. de Corbigny (who, I think, died in 1812) were not a sum to be remembered when her lofty soul found its element, and her interests were keenly excited and involved in the changing events of 1814 and 1815. Louis Lambert was at that time too poor, and also too proud to seek his benefactress, who was travelling in Europe. Nevertheless, he did go on foot from Blois to Paris, intending to see her on her return, and reached her house, unfortunately, on the very day she died. Two letters which he had written to her remained unopened. The recollection of her kind intentions toward Louis Lambert now survives only in the memory of a few of his early comrades who, like myself, were struck from the first with the extraordinary facts of his history.

One must needs have been a collegian at Vendôme to understand the effect produced upon our minds by the announcement of a "New-comer," and the special

impression which, under the circumstances, Louis Lambert's arrival made upon us.

A few words upon the primitive rules of our institution, which was partly religious and partly military, are necessary to explain the life which Louis Lambert was about to lead. The order of the Oratorians, vowed like that of the Jesuits to the education of youth, owned before the Revolution various provincial establishments, of which the most important were the colleges of Vendôme, Tournon, La Flèche, Pont-le-Voy, Sorèze, and Juilly. That of Vendôme, as well as others, raised, I think, a certain number of cadets for the army. The abolition of the teaching fraternities decreed by the Convention had very little effect upon the Institution at Vendôme. When the first excitement was over, the college recovered its buildings; the Oratorians who had dispersed through the environs returned, and re-established their school under the old rules, — preserving the habits and manners and customs which gave the college a character such as I did not find in any of the lyceums which I entered after leaving Vendôme.

Standing in the centre of the town, on the little river Loir which bathes the outer walls, the college presents a vast inclosure carefully shut in, containing all the appurtenances necessary to an institution of its kind, — a chapel, theatre, infirmary, bakehouse, gardens, and a water-course. This college, the most important educational seminary in the middle provinces, derives its pupils from those provinces and from the colonies. Distance, therefore, prevents the parents from visiting

their children frequently, and the rules forbid vacations beyond the walls. Once entered, the pupils never leave the college until their education is completed. With the exception of regular walks made beyond the gates under the guidance of the Fathers, everything is so conducted as to give the institution the advantages of conventual discipline. In my day, the "corrector" was still a living memory, and the classic brass ferule played its terrible part with distinction. The punishments formerly invented by the Company of Jesus — which were as terrifying to the moral as to the physical being — remained in all the integrity of their early promulgation. Letters to parents were obligatory on certain days, so was confession. Our sins and our affections were thus under strict rule. All things bore the stamp of monastic uniformity. I remember, among other relics of the old institution, the Sunday morning inspection to which we were subjected. We were in full dress, drawn up in line like soldiers, awaiting the two directors who, followed by the masters and the purveyors, examined us under the triple head of clothes, health, and morality.

The two or three hundred pupils which the college was capable of containing were divided, according to the old custom, into four sections, named the *Minimes*, the *Petits*, the *Moyens*, and the *Grands*. The *Minimes* division contained the eighth and seventh classes; that of the *Petits* the sixth, fifth, and fourth; that of *Moyens* the third and second; and head of all, the *Grands*, the first class of rhetoric, philosophy, special

mathematics, physics, and chemistry. Each of these divisions had a building of its own, with classrooms and courtyard opening on a wide common ground which led to the refectory. This refectory, worthy of an ancient religious order, held all the scholars. Contrary to the custom of other educational bodies, we were allowed to talk during meals, — an Oratorian indulgence which enabled us to exchange dishes according to our taste. This gastronomic barter never ceased to be one of the liveliest pleasures of our college life. If some *Moyen* sitting at the head of his table preferred a plate of red peas to his dessert (we were allowed a dessert), the proposal passed from mouth to mouth, “A dessert for peas,” — until some gourmand accepted it; the latter then sent up his plate of peas from hand to hand until it reached the proposer, who returned his dessert in the same way. No mistake ever occurred. If several proposals of the same kind were set going, each bore its own number, and the cry went round, “First peas for first dessert.” The tables were long; the perpetual traffic kept every one in motion; we talked and ate and passed the plates with surprising activity. The chatter of two or three hundred lads, the coming and going of the servants as they changed the plates, served the dishes, and dispensed the bread, and the supervision of the directors, all combined to make the refectory of Vendôme an unparalleled sight of its kind, and one which always astonished visitors.

To ameliorate our lives, deprived as they were of

communication with the outward world and severed from all family pleasures, the Fathers allowed us to keep pigeons and cultivate gardens. Our two or three hundred little cotes, and a thousand or more pigeons perched on the outer walls which surrounded our thirty gardens, made a sight even more singular than our dinners in the refectory. But it would take too long to relate the many peculiarities which made the college of Vendôme a place apart, rich in recollections for those whose youth was spent there. Which of us does not remember with delight, notwithstanding our painful pursuit of knowledge, the occasional pranks of that cloistral life? — the dainties surreptitiously bought in our walks abroad; the permission to play cards and act plays during the holidays, amusements necessitated by our solitude; then the military music, a relic of the cadets, our museum, our chaplain, our father-professors; the particular games forbidden or allowed; the long slides made in winter, the clacking of our old-fashioned wooden clogs, and above all, the barter continually going on at the little shop set up on the common ground near the refectory. This shop was kept by a sort of Maitre Jacques; from it the *Grands* and the *Petits* were allowed to purchase at tariff prices, tools, boxes, stilts, ruffed and pouter pigeons, prayer-books (not often in demand), pen-knives; letter-paper, pens, pencils, ink of all colors, balls, marbles, — in short, the entire collection of boyish fancies and fascinations, beside other things, from the sauce of the pigeons we were forced to kill, to the earthenware jars in which we kept

the boiled rice of our supper for the next day's breakfast. Can any of us have forgotten the beating of his heart at the opening of this shop during our Sunday recreations? how he went to it, in his turn, to spend the sum allotted to him, — the slender sum granted by our parents, which compelled us to make frugal choice among the many objects which excited the liveliest desires in our souls. The bride in her honeymoon, on whom the husband bestows twelve times in the year a purse of gold, the welcome pin-money for her caprices, never dreamed of her various purchases, each one of which would absorb the whole sum, as we did of ours on the eve of the first Sunday in the month. For six francs we possessed, during that one night, the whole universe of good things in that inexhaustible shop. During the church services none of us sang a response that was not blended with hopes and calculations. Few indeed can remember possessing a sou or two for the second Sunday. And then, how precociously we bowed to social laws by pitying, succoring, and despising those pariahs whom paternal avarice or poverty deprived of money! Whoever will picture to himself the isolation of this great seminary and its monastic buildings in the centre of a little town, and the four sections or parks in which we were hierarchically sequestered, can form an idea of the interest excited in our minds by the arrival of a "New-comer," — a passenger, as it were, from distant shores. No young duchess presented at court for the first time was ever more maliciously criticised than the New-comer by all the scholars of his

division. Usually, during the evening recreation and before prayers, the toadies, who were in the habit of talking with whichever of the two Fathers it was whose duty required him to superintend us for a week, were the first to hear the news, — “To-morrow you are to have a New-comer.” Immediately the cry arose and echoed through the classrooms, “A New-comer! a New-comer!” We all ran in and clustered round the regent, who was eagerly questioned. “Where does he come from?” “What is his name?” “What class will you put him in?”

The arrival of Louis Lambert was a theme for a tale worthy of the Arabian Nights. I was then in the fourth class among the *Petits*. We had two masters as regents to whom we gave the traditional name of “Fathers,” though both were laymen. In my day there were only three real Oratorians remaining at Vendôme to whom the title legitimately belonged. In 1813 they left the college, which had then become gradually secularized, and retired to the altars of parish churches and country cures, like Lambert’s uncle, the curate of Mer. Father Haugoult, the regent of the week, was a good enough man, without any of the higher forms of knowledge; he had none of the tact which is so necessary to discover the different characters of boys and to apportion their discipline accordingly.

Father Haugoult was induced very willingly to relate the singular circumstances which, on the morrow, were to bring us the most extraordinary of all New-comers. Games stopped at once. All the *Petits* crowded about

him silently to hear the tale of Louis Lambert, found by Madame de Staël, like an aërolite, at the corner of a wood. Monsieur Haugoult explained to us about Madame de Staël. During that evening I imagined her ten feet high; since then I have seen the picture of Corinne in which Gérard represents her tall and beautiful. Alas, the ideal woman portrayed by my imagination so far surpassed it that Madame de Staël fell forever in my mind, even after reading that vigorous and virile book entitled "Germany." But Lambert was a marvel of another kind. After examining him, Monsieur Mareschal, the director of studies, hesitated, so said Father Haugoult, to put him among the *Grands*. Louis's weakness in Latin had decided the director to put him in the fourth class, but he would doubtless rise at the rate of a class a year; and even now, as an exceptional case, he was to be in the academy. *Proh pudor!* we were to have the honor of counting among the *Petits* a coat decorated with the red ribbon of an academician of Vendôme. Brilliant privileges were reserved to academicians; they often dined at the director's table; twice a year they held literary meetings, at which we were present to hear their dissertations. An academician was a miniature great man. If every Vendôman would tell the truth, he would admit that in later years an academician of the veritable French Academy seemed to him a far less astounding personage than the colossal child decorated with the cross and the magic ribbon of our own academy. It was very difficult to belong to that august body without reaching

it through the second section ; for the academicians held weekly public sessions every Thursday during the holidays, at which they read to us tales in prose and verse, epistles, treatises, tragedies, and comedies ; compositions that were above the minds of the secondary classes. I long remembered a certain tale entitled "The Green Ass," which was, I believe, the most noted production of this seat of learning. But a scholar of the fourth class in the academy, think of it ! Among us we were to have a child of fourteen, a poet, beloved of Madame de Staël, a future genius, — so said Father Haugoult, — a wizard in knowledge, a fellow capable of writing a theme or making a version while the bell was calling us to recitation ; a lad who learned his lessons by reading them once. Louis Lambert upset all our ideas. Moreover, Father Haugoult's own curiosity and the eagerness which he showed to see the New-comer still further whetted our excited imaginations.

"If he has pigeons there's no cote for him ; what a pity !" said one of us, who afterwards became a celebrated agriculturist.

"Who will sit next him ?" asked another.

"Oh, I wish I could be his *faisant* !" ¹ cried an enthusiast.

In our college vocabulary the word *faisant* (in other colleges called *copin*) presents an idiom which is difficult of translation. It expressed a fraternal sharing of the good and evil of our youthful lives, a community of interests fruitful of quarrels and reconciliations, the

¹ *Faisant* and *copin* (or *copain*) are college slang for "comrade."

bond of an alliance offensive and defensive. And yet, strange to say, I never knew two brothers who were *faisants*. If man lives only by sentiment, perhaps he thinks he impoverishes existence by mingling an affection he has won with his natural affections.

The impression which Father Haugoult's remarks made upon me that evening is among the most vivid of my youth ; I can only compare it with the reading of Robinson Crusoe. Later on, I owed to the memory of these strong impressions a reflection, new perhaps, on the different effects produced by words in their several meanings. There is nothing absolute in a word ; we act upon it more than it can act on us ; its force depends on the images we have acquired and which we group about it. However, the study of this phenomenon requires wide elaboration, which would be out of place here.

That night, being unable to sleep, I had a long discussion with my neighbor in the dormitory on the extraordinary being we were to have among us on the morrow. This neighbor, subsequently an officer, now a writer on the higher questions of philosophy, named Barchou de Penhoën, has not failed to fulfil his own good promise, and to justify the chance that united in the same class, on the same bench, under the same roof, the only two pupils of Vendôme who are publicly known at the present day ; for up to the date at which this book is published our comrade Dufaure has not entered parliamentary life. But at the period of which I write the recent translator of Fichte, the interpreter and friend of Ballanche, was

already concerned as I was with metaphysical questions ; often we rhapsodized about God, Nature, and our own being. He leaned towards scepticism. Desirous of maintaining such views he denied the possibility of Lambert's great faculties ; whereas I, having lately read "*Les Enfants célèbres*," crushed him with such proofs as Montcalm, Pic de la Mirandola, Pascal, and other precocious brains, — anomalies forever celebrated in the history of the human mind, the precursors of Louis Lambert. I was myself passionately devoted to reading. Thanks to my father's desire to see me in the *École Polytechnique*, I took private lessons in mathematics. My tutor, the college librarian, allowed me to take such books as I pleased, paying little attention to those I carried out of the library ; a tranquil retreat where, during the hours of recreation, he made me go for my lessons. I think he was either unfitted to be a tutor, or much preoccupied by some serious undertaking, for he very willingly allowed me to read instead of reciting, while he busied himself in other ways. So, in virtue of a tacit compact which grew up between us, I made no complaint because I learned nothing, and he took no notice of the books I borrowed from the library. Carried away by this ill-timed passion, I neglected my studies and composed poems which certainly gave little promise of future greatness, if I may judge by this unwieldy line, famous among my comrades, which began an epic on "*The Incas* : " —

"Oh, Inca ! O king unfortunate and miserable !"

I was nicknamed "*the Poet*" in derision of this per-

formance, but ridicule did not repress me. I continued to scribble sorry verses in spite of Monsieur Mareschal our director's good advice; he tried to cure my inveterate propensity by telling me the fable of the fledgling which fell out its nest into many troubles because it tried to fly before its wings had grown. I persisted in my desultory reading and became the least assiduous, the laziest, dreamiest pupil in the whole division of the *Petits*, and of course the oftenest punished. This autobiographic digression will show the reader the nature of the thoughts that took possession of me on the arrival of Lambert. I was then twelve years old. From the first, I felt a keen sympathy for a child with whom I had a certain likeness of temperament. I was about to obtain a companion in revery and meditation. Without knowing as yet what glory was, I thought it glorious to be the comrade of a youth whose immortality was foretold by Madame de Staël. To my eyes Louis Lambert was a giant.

The looked-for morrow came. Just before breakfast we heard the double tread of Monsieur Mareschal and the New-comer sounding in the silent courtyard. All heads turned to the door of the classroom. Father Haugoult, who shared our agony of expectation, did not utter the usual "hush" with which he silenced our whisperings and recalled us to work. We beheld the New-comer, whom Monsieur Mareschal led in by the hand. The regent stepped down from his seat, and the director said to him with solemnity, according to the formal custom: "Monsieur, I bring you Mon-

sieur Louis Lambert; you will put him in the fourth class; he will begin his duties to-morrow." Then, after a few words in a low voice to the regent, he said aloud, "Where will you seat him?" It would have been unjust to move any of us for a New-comer, and there being but one vacant desk, next to mine, I being the last pupil who had entered college, Louis Lambert was sent to occupy it. Although the lessons were not over, we all rose to look at him. Monsieur Mareschal heard our whisperings, noticed the insubordination, and said, with the kindness that made him particularly dear to us: "At any rate be good, and don't disturb the other classes."

The words virtually gave us a holiday until breakfast time; and we all clustered round Lambert, while the director took a turn in the yard with Father Haugoult. We were eighty young devils as bold as birds of prey. Though we had all passed the same cruel ordeal, we never dreamed of sparing a New-comer the satirical jokes, the questions, the insolence, which are brought into play on such occasions, to the great confusion of the neophyte, whose nature, manners, and force of character are thus tested. Lambert, who was either calm or dumbfounded, made no reply. One of us then remarked that he no doubt came from the School of Pythagoras. This excited a general laugh. The New-comer was thenceforth nicknamed Pythagoras for the rest of his college life. Nevertheless, Lambert's piercing glance, the indifference expressed on his face for our boyish nonsense, so out of keeping with the

nature of his own mind, the easy attitude he maintained, and his obvious physical strength, which was fully that of his years, impressed the most audacious of the young scamps among us with a feeling of respect. As for me, I was close beside him, busy in silently examining him.

Louis was a thin, slight lad about four feet six inches in height; his tanned face and sunburnt hands gave the idea of a muscular vigor which did not naturally belong to him; and it therefore happened that two months after his entrance at college, life in the classrooms had made him lose his healthy color and, little by little, he grew pale and white as a woman. His head was of remarkable size. His hair, black and curling in heavy masses, gave an inexpressible charm to his brow, the dimensions of which were extraordinary even to our boyish minds, unobservant, as may well be supposed, of phrenological signs, the science of phrenology being then in its infancy. The beauty of that prophetic forehead came chiefly from the pure lines of the double arch of the brows, beneath which the dark eyes shone as if from a setting of alabaster; these brows had the rare attraction of being perfectly parallel, starting on a line with each other at the spring of the nose. It was, however, difficult to think of his face, which was otherwise very irregular, in presence of eyes whose glance possessed a magnificent variety of expression, seeming, as it were, lined with the spirit. Sometimes clear and wonderfully penetrating, at other times of heavenly sweetness, the eyes grew dull, deadened, colorless,

when he yielded himself up to contemplation. At such times they were like window-panes from which the sun is suddenly withdrawn after illuminating them. It was the same with his physical vigor and organism as with his glance, — the same immobility, the same capricious changes. His voice was sweet as a woman's when she owns her love; then again it could be harsh, strained, untrue, if it be allowable to use these terms to express unusual effects. As to his physical strength, he was habitually unable to bear the fatigue of our boyish games, and seemed weak, at times almost infirm. But, during the days of his novitiate as a New-comer, one of our bullies having laughed at the sickly delicacy which made him unfit for the violent exercises in vogue among us, Lambert seized with both hands the end of one of the tables to which were fastened twelve heavy desks ranged opposite to each other; then leaning against the regent's rostrum he placed his feet on the transversal lower bar of the table and said: "Ten of you may try to move it." It was impossible to tear the table from him. I was present; and I can testify to this extraordinary display of strength. Lambert possessed the gift of calling up, at certain moments, extraordinary powers, and of concentrating them on a given point. But the college lads, accustomed like men to judge everything according to first impressions, studied Louis Lambert only during the first few days that succeeded his arrival, and then he certainly belied all Madame de Staël's predictions, and performed none of the prodigies we expected of him.

After a three months' trial, Louis Lambert was pronounced a very ordinary scholar. I alone was allowed to penetrate that sublime — why should I not say it? — that divine soul. Can there be anything nearer to God than genius in the heart of a child? The agreement of our tastes and of our thoughts made us friends and *faisants*. Our intimacy grew so close that the other lads coupled our names; one was never mentioned without the other, and if either of us had to be called, the cry was always "Poet-and-Pythagoras!" There were other names among us thus joined in wedlock.

So it happened that I was for two years the college friend and brother of poor Louis Lambert, and my life during that period was so closely welded to his that I am to-day able to write the history of his mind. Yet I was long ignorant of the poetry and the intellectual wealth hidden in the heart and beneath the brow of my companion. I was thirty years old before my observations of him ripened and, as it were, crystallized, — before a stream of steady light illumined them afresh in my mind, and enabled me to understand the full meaning of phenomena to which I had been an immature witness. I had followed them without explaining to myself their grandeur nor yet their mechanism; I had even forgotten some and remembered only the most striking. But to-day my memory is able to reassemble and bring them into order; I am initiated into the secrets of that fruitful brain as I now look back to the happy days of our young friendship. Time alone has enabled me to penetrate the meaning of the facts and

events which filled that hidden life, as they fill that of so many other men who are lost to science and human knowledge. This history will therefore be, both in the representation and in the estimate of things, full of anachronisms, which are, however, purely moral, and will not injure the tale in its own point of interest.

During the first months of his life at Vendôme, Louis was the victim of a malady, the symptoms of which were imperceptible to our superiors, which necessarily hindered the exercise of his higher faculties. Accustomed to the open air, to the independence of his hitherto chance education; tenderly cared for by the old uncle who loved him; thinking and dreaming in the sunshine, — it was very hard for him to bow to college rules, to walk in the ranks, to live within the four walls of a room where eighty lads were forced to sit silently on wooden stools, erect before their desks. His senses were endowed with a perfection which gave them exquisite delicacy, and everything within him suffered from this community of life. The exhalations which poisoned the air and mingled with the odors of a classroom which was always dirty and littered with fragments of breakfast or luncheon, affected his sense of smell, — a sense in closer relation than any other to the cerebral system, and which if vitiated must cause invisible disturbance to the organs of thought.

Besides these sources of atmospheric corruption, there were closets in the classrooms where we kept the pigeons which were killed for feast-days, or hid provisions filched from the refectory. Moreover, each hall con-

tained an immense stone on which stood, at all hours, two pails full of water, — a species of watering-trough where every morning we were made to wash our faces and hands in presence of a master. From there we went to a table where the women-servants combed our hair and powdered it. The classrooms were cleaned only once a day, in the mornings before we were up; consequently they were always dirty; and in spite of the many windows and the height of the doors, the air was constantly poisoned by the emanations from the wash-pails, the smells from the closets, the thousand and one pursuits of the scholars, not to speak of their eighty bodies crowded together. This sort of collegial *humus*, mingling with mud which our feet brought in from the courtyards, made an atmosphere of intolerable fetor.

The loss of the pure country air which he had hitherto breathed, the change in his habits, the discipline of the college, all combined to depress Lambert's vitality. With his head leaning on his left hand, the elbow resting on the desk, he passed hours gazing into the courtyard, at the foliage of the trees, or the clouds of the sky; he seemed to be studying his lessons, but the regent, seeing the motionless pen and the blank page, would frequently cry out, "You are doing nothing, Lambert!" That fatal "You are doing nothing" was like a pin pricking into Louis's heart. He had no leisure for recreation because of the "pensums" he was forced to write. The pensum, a punishment whose nature varies according to the customs of different colleges, consisted at

Vendôme of a number of lines to be copied during recess. Lambert and I were so overloaded with pensums that we did not have six free days during our two years' intimacy. Without the books which we got from the library, which kept life in our brains, these conditions of existence would have driven us both into dull brutishness. The loss of wholesome exercise is fatal to children. The habit of always acting a part, when acquired in early life, is said to injure the constitution of royal personages, if that vice of their destiny is not corrected by the manners and customs of a campaign or the freedom of the hunting-field. If the rules of etiquette and of courts can affect the spinal marrow to the point of feminizing the pelvis of kings, softening cerebral fibres, and thus debasing the race, what deep lesions, both physical and moral, must a continual deprivation of fresh air, motion, and gayety produce among the pupils of a public institution? The cloistral régime of colleges and seminaries demands the attention of the authorities charged with the management of public instruction, if any such be found who do not think exclusively of themselves.

Louis and I brought pensums upon us in a hundred ways. Our memories were so good that we never studied our lessons. It sufficed to hear our comrades reciting portions of French, Latin, or even grammar; we could always repeat them when our turn came; but if, by ill-luck, the master reversed the order and questioned us first, we often did not even know what the lesson was; then followed a pensum, in spite of our

ingenious excuses. We always waited till the last moment to write our themes. If we had a book to finish, or a reverie to pursue, the theme was neglected ; fruitful source of penums ! Many a time our versions were written during the time when the head of the class, charged with the duty of collecting them, was receiving the papers from the various scholars.

To the moral difficulties which Lambert encountered before he was acclimated to the college, was added another apprenticeship not less harsh, and through which we all had to pass, — that of physical suffering, which assailed us in various ways. The delicate skin of childhood requires extreme care, especially in winter, when schoolboys exchange at all hours the hot temperature of classrooms for the icy or muddy atmosphere of the courtyards. For want of motherly home-care the *Petits* and the *Minimes* were covered with chilblains and painful chapped skins, which they were forced to have dressed during the breakfast-hour, though it was very imperfectly done by reason of the great number of suffering fingers, toes, and heels that needed curing. In fact, many of the lads preferred the evil to the remedy ; they had to choose between finishing their themes, losing the delights of sliding on the ice, and the necessity of taking off parts of their clothing carelessly put on and still more carelessly worn. Besides, it was the college custom to laugh at those who went to have their wounds dressed, and it was an object to get rid of the rags which the hospital nurse wound round the suffering extremities ; consequently, in winter, many of us, whose

hands and feet were half-dead or burning with pain, were little disposed to work, and were punished because they did not work. The Fathers, too often taken in by sham illness, paid little attention to these real sufferings. Except for the costs of their board, the pupils were maintained at the expense of the college. The authorities were careful in the matter of shoes and clothing; hence the weekly inspection which I have already mentioned, — excellent for the administration, sad in its results (as such customs always are) for the governed. Woe to the *Petit* who acquired the evil habit of treading his shoes down at heel, splitting the leather, or wearing out the soles prematurely, either by clumsy walking or by kicking his feet about in school to satisfy that need of action which besets all children.

During the winter Lambert never went to walk without enduring the keenest suffering. In the first place, the pain of his chilblains was like a bad attack of gout; then the hooks and strings which held his shoes together would break, or the slip-shod heels prevented those tormenting articles from staying firmly on his feet, and he was obliged to drag them along the icy paths, fortunate if the clay soil of the Vendômois left them on his feet. Worse still, the water or the snow would get to his toes through some unseen rip, and the foot would begin to swell. Out of sixty boys scarcely ten went to walk without enduring some such torture. Yet we all followed our leaders, carried along by the general movement, just as men are driven in life by life itself. Many a time some gallant child has wept with fury

while summoning his courage, first to go forward, and then to get back to the fold in spite of his pains; so keenly does the young soul dread both laughter and compassion, — equally forms of ridicule. In college, as in social life, the strong despise the weak without knowing in what true strength consists.

But this was not all. No gloves were allowed. If by chance our parents, the hospital nurse, or the director ordered us to wear them, the practical jokers and the upper-class fellows seized and put them on the stoves, pretending to dry them, and thus shrivelled them up. If the gloves escaped this seizure, they remained wet, and shrank in the drying for want of proper care. Gloves were therefore an impossibility. Besides, they presupposed a privilege, and lads choose to be equals.

These various forms of suffering assailed Louis Lambert. Like contemplative men, who in the stillness of their revery contract a habit of mechanical movement, he had a mania for scuffling with his shoes, which were soon worn out. His feminine skin and his delicate lips and ears were chapped at the first frost. His soft white hands became numb and red. He was constantly taking cold. In short, he was enveloped in suffering until he grew somewhat accustomed to Vendôme habits and learned by cruel experience to “look out for himself,” — if I may use that collegiate expression. He was forced to take care of his closet, his desk, his clothes, his shoes; he had to see that his ink was not stolen, nor his books, copy-books, or pens; in

short, to think of all the details of our boyish lives which the selfish and commonplace lads, who invariably carried off the prizes for excellence and good conduct, attended to with conscientious care, while he, the boy of promise, neglected them and abandoned himself with passion to the stream of his thoughts, beneath the spell of an imagination that was almost divine.

But this was not all. A ceaseless struggle goes on between masters and scholars, to which nothing in social life can be compared, unless it be the warfare of the opposition against the ministry of a representative government. But the journalists and orators of an opposition are less prompt to profit by an advantage, less stern in resenting a wrong, less bitter in their ridicule, than the lads of a seminary against the masters appointed to rule them. Angels would lose patience in such a calling. We must not be too severe to a poor school-master, ill-paid and not over wise, if he is sometimes unjust and angry. Watched perpetually by mocking eyes, surrounded by pitfalls, he does sometimes avenge himself on the boys by a harshness they are only too ready to proclaim. Except in the case of great wrongdoing, for which there were special punishments, the ferule was the *ultima ratio Patrum* at Vendôme. For neglected themes, lessons ill-learned, and vulgar pranks, the pensum sufficed; but a wound to the master's self-love was visited with the ferule. Among the physical sufferings which we endured the keenest was certainly that inflicted by the strip of leather, two fingers thick,

applied to our shrinking hands with all the strength of an angry master. The culprit was compelled to kneel in the middle of the room to receive this classic punishment. He was forced to rise from his seat, walk to the master's desk and kneel down, exposed to the inquisitive, often jeering, glances of his comrades. To a sensitive spirit these preparations were an additional torture, like the transit from the Palais to the Grève which prisoners condemned to death were formerly compelled to make. According to their natures some lads wept, before or after the punishment; others accepted their pain stoically; and yet, while awaiting it, the bravest could scarcely repress the quivering of their features.

Louis Lambert was frequently subjected to this punishment, and he owed it to a faculty of his nature of which he was long unconscious. When suddenly awakened from meditation by the regent's stern "You are doing nothing, Lambert!" it often happened that without his own knowledge he would give the master a look of irrepressible disdain, charged with thought as a Leyden jar is charged with electricity. Such a glance naturally angered the regent; provoked by the silent epigram, he proceeded to teach a lesson to that fulminating eye. The first time he was aware of the disdainful gleam, which struck him like a flash of lightning, he made the following speech which I have always remembered: "If you look at me again in that way, Lambert, I shall give you the ferule." At these words every head went up, and all eyes watched the master

and Louis. The speech was so absurd that again the boy's glance struck the Father like lightning. From that time forth there was a feud between the regent and Lambert which resulted in many applications of the ferule. Louis thus became aware of the oppressive power of his eye.

This poor poet, so nervously constituted, often as languishing as a woman, the victim of chronic melancholy, sick with his own genius as a young girl with the love she seeks and yet knows nothing of; this child, so strong and yet so feeble, transplanted by Corinne from his native meadows, and forced into the soil of a college where every mind and every body, no matter what its natural bent and temperament, must adapt itself to a common rule, as gold is shaped into the circumference of a coin by machinery, — Louis Lambert suffered at every point where pain could seize upon flesh or spirit. Chained to a bench and a desk, beaten with that leathern thong, smitten with an illness that affected all his senses, crushed by a procession of evils, what could he do but passively yield his outer being to the various tyrannies of his college life. Like martyrs who smile at the stake, he escaped to the heaven which thought opened to him. Perhaps this inward life helped him to foreknow the mysteries in which he had so much faith.

Our private independence, our illicit occupations, the apparent indolence and torpidity in which we both lived, our repeated punishments, our repugnance to themes and pensums, gave us the unchallenged reputation of

being shameless and incorrigible. Our masters despised us, and we fell equally under the ban of our school-mates, from whom we hid our contraband studies in dread of ridicule. This double disapproval, unjust as it was from the masters, was natural in our comrades. Louis and I could neither play at ball, nor run, nor walk on stilts. On the "amnesty days," or when, by chance, we were free of pensums, we shared none of the prevailing amusements. We sat apart under a tree in the courtyard, aloof from the games which went on about us. The Poet-and-Pythagoras were exceptional beings, — they lived outside of the common life. The keen instinct and sensitive self-love of youth made the other scholars aware that our minds were in some way either higher or lower than their own. Out of this perception grew hatred on the part of some to our silent aristocracy, contempt for our perfect uselessness on the part of others. These feelings, however, were unknown to us at the time; perhaps I have only divined them as I now write. We lived like a pair of rats lurking in the corner of the classroom which held our desks, through the recreation-hours as well as the study-hours. This eccentric proceeding was calculated to put us, and did put us, at war with the other lads of our division. Forgotten, as a general thing, we lived quietly and half-happily in our retreat, like two forms of vegetation or two bits of ornament which would otherwise have been missing to the classroom. But occasionally the more provoking of our comrades insulted us for the mere love of exhibiting their power; to which we responded with a bitter con-

tempt which brought a rain of blows on the Poet-and-Pythagoras.

Lambert's nostalgia lasted several months. I am unable to picture the melancholy to which he fell a prey. Many an attempt has proved a failure. Having each of us played the part of the "Leper of Aosta" we both knew the emotions Monsieur de Maistre has described in that book before they were written by his eloquent pen. Now a book may recall the memories of childhood, but it never surpasses nor equals them. Lambert's sorrows taught me hymns of grief that were more impressive far than Werther's finest pages. But perhaps there is no comparison possible between the suffering inflicted by the repression of a passion under social laws and the sorrows of a child longing for the glory of the sun, for the dew of the valleys, and for freedom. Werther was the slave of a desire; but Lambert was a soul enslaved. Where gifts are equal, the feelings based upon the simpler and truer desires, truer because purer, must surpass the lamentations of genius. After gazing for hours at the foliage of the trees in the courtyard Louis would turn to me and utter some thought; but that thought revealed a far-reaching reverie.

"Happily for me," he said one day, "there come joyful moments when the walls of the classroom disappear, and I am away — in the meadows. What delight to float upon thought as a bird upon its wing."

"Why is nature so prodigal of the color green?" he asked me at another time. "How is it she allows so few straight lines? Why does man, in his creations,

seldom use curves? Why should he alone have the sentiment of straight lines?"

Sayings like these revealed the soaring of his mind through space. Surely, he had scanned the scenery of many regions or breathed the perfume of the woods and forests. Sublime and living elegy that he was, he was ever silent and resigned, — always suffering, yet unable to say, "I suffer!" An eagle, hovering above the worlds in search of food, he was hemmed in by narrow, dirty walls; and thus it was that his life became, in the fullest acceptation of the term, an ideal life. Filled with contempt for the almost useless studies to which we were condemned, Louis went his aerial way, utterly detached from the things about us. Obeying the need of imitation which possesses children, I endeavored to conform my existence to his. Louis inspired me all the more readily with his passion for the sort of sleep into which the body falls when the mind is plunged in meditation, because I was younger and more impressible. We accustomed ourselves, like lovers, to think as one and to share our reveries. Already his intuitive sensations had the acuteness which belongs to the intellectual perceptions of great poets, leading often to the verge of madness.

"Do you feel as I do," he one day asked me, "that strange, fantastic sufferings are going on within you in spite of your own self? For example, if I think strongly on the sensation the blade of my pen-knife would cause if thrust into my flesh, I instantly experience a sharp pain, as though I had really cut myself; nothing is

lacking but the flow of blood. But this feeling takes me by surprise, like a sudden noise breaking into a deep silence. An idea causing physical suffering! What do you think of that?"

When he gave expression to such vague thoughts we both fell back into naïve reverie; we tried to decipher within ourselves the indescribable phenomena relating to the generation of thought, which Lambert hoped to catch in all its developments, so as to reveal the mysterious process at some future day. After such discussions, mingled as they often were with childish play, a look would flame in Lambert's blazing eyes; he pressed my hands, and from his soul some saying issued by which he strove to gather and emit the thoughts within him.

"To think is to see," he said one day, roused by one of our discussions on the principle of human organization. "All science rests on deduction, — a chink of vision by which we descend from cause to effect returning upward from effect to cause; or, in a broader sense, poetry, like every work of art, springs from a swift perception of things."

He was all spiritual; but I ventured to oppose him, using his own observations to show that intellect was an altogether physical product. We were both right. Possibly the words materialism and spiritualism express two sides of one and the same thing. His studies on the substance of thought made him accept with a sort of pride the life of privation to which our indolence and our neglect of school duty condemned us. He had a certain consciousness of his own value which sustained

him in his mental efforts. With what gentleness did his soul react on mine ! How often have we sat together on our bench, absorbed in our books, mutually forgetting each other, yet knowing that each was there, plunged in the ocean of ideas like two fishes swimming in the same current. Our life was seemingly nothing else than vegetation ; we existed in our brains and in our hearts. Feelings and thoughts were the sole events of our college years.

Lambert exercised an influence over my imagination which I feel to this day. I listened eagerly to his talk in which the marvellous, so dear to youth and age in tales where truth assumes a grotesque form, prevailed. His passion for mystery and the credulity natural to youth led us often to talk of heaven and of hell. Louis tried, in explaining Swedenborg, to make me share his beliefs as to angels. Even when he reasoned falsely his observations of the power of man were amazing, and gave to his words an impress of truth without which nothing is really possible in any art. The romantic end which he awarded to human destiny was of a nature to foster the longing of virgin imaginations to yield themselves to belief. The dogmas and idols of a people are conceived and born in the days of its youth. The supernatural beings before whom it trembles are the embodiment of its own feelings, of its expanding needs. All that my memory retains of our conversations, full of poetry, on the Swedish prophet, whose works I have since read from curiosity, may be summed up in the following statement.

There are within us two distinct beings. According to Swedenborg, the angel is the individual in whom the inward being has triumphed over the outward being. If a man desires to obey his calling as angel (when thought has shown him the fact of his double existence) he must seek to nourish the exquisite angelic nature which is within him. If, failing to possess this translucent vision of his destiny, he lets the corporeal tendencies predominate, instead of merely strengthening and supporting the intellectual life, his powers pass into the service of his external senses, and the angel slowly perishes through the materialization of both natures. On the other hand, if he nourishes the inward being with the essences that accord with it, the soul rises above matter and endeavors to get free of it. When the separation takes place under the form which we call death, the angel, powerful enough to break loose from its envelope, continues to exist, and its true life begins. The infinite individualities which differentiate men can only be explained by this double existence ; they make it comprehensible, and they demonstrate it. In fact, the distance that exists between a man whose inert intellect condemns him to apparent stupidity and another man whose exercise of his inward faculties has given him some force, of whatever kind, must lead us to suppose that between men of genius and other beings there lies the same distance as between a blind man and a seer. This thought, which infinitely extends creation, gives in a measure the key of heaven. Apparently blended in one nature here below, created beings are in fact di-

vided, according to the perfection of their *inward being*, into separate spheres whose language and ethics are alien to each other. In the world invisible, as in the real world, when some inhabitant of the lower region enters the higher circle without being worthy of so doing, not only is he unable to comprehend the customs or the subjects of discourse, but his presence paralyzes the hearts and lips of others. Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, seems to have had some slight intuition of these spheres, which begin in the world of sorrows and rise in spiral circles up to heaven. The doctrine of Swedenborg is the work of a lucid mind which has gathered and recorded the innumerable phenomena by which angels reveal themselves among men.

This doctrine, which I thus endeavor to sum up and show in its logical meaning, was first presented to me by Lambert with all the allurements of mystery, wrapped in the phraseological swaddling-clothes peculiar to mystics, — an obscure diction filled with abstractions, so stimulating to the brain that there are certain books by Jacob Boehm, Swedenborg, and Madame Guyon whose thrilling power calls up as many and as multi-form imaginations as opium can produce. Lambert told me such astounding mystical facts, he excited my imagination so vividly that my head was dazed. Yet I loved to plunge into that world of mystery, invisible to the senses, where each soul longs to penetrate, whether we conceive it under the shadowy form of Futurity, or the stalwart shapes of Fable. These violent reactions of the soul upon itself taught me, unawares,

to know its strength, and accustomed me to the toils of thought.

As for Lambert, he explained everything by his theory of angels. To him pure love, the love of which we dream in youth, was the coming together of two angelic natures. Nothing could equal the ardor with which he longed to meet a woman-angel. Ah! who more truly than he was fitted to inspire and to feel love? If anything could give an idea of exquisite sensibility it was the kind and loving nature revealed by his sentiments, his words, his actions, his merest gesture, — in short, the conjugality which bound us to each other and found expression in the college name of *faisant*. There was no distinction between the things that were his and the things that were mine. We imitated each other's writing, so that one could do the tasks of both. If either of us had a book to finish which must be returned, he could read in peace while the other did his theme or his pensum. We regarded these lessons as a tax levied on our tranquillity. If my memory serves me right, they showed remarkable superiority when Lambert wrote them. But the regent, taking us for two dullards, judged our papers by foregone prejudice, and even produced them for the amusement of our comrades. I remember one evening, as the session, which lasted from two to four o'clock, was ending, the master caught up a version of Lambert's. The text began with the words *Caius Gracchus, vir nobilis*. Louis had translated them into, "Caius Gracchus was noblehearted."

“Where do you find anything about ‘heart’ in *nobilis*?” asked the professor, sternly.

Every one laughed, and Louis looked at the master with a bewildered air.

“What would Madame la Baronne de Staël say if she knew you gave a wrong construction to a word which signifies a noble race of patrician origin!”

“She would say you were a fool,” I remarked in a low voice.

“Monsieur le Poëte, you will go to prison for eight days,” said the professor, who unfortunately overheard me.

Lambert gently said, with a look of inexpressible tenderness at me, “*Vir nobilis*!”

Madame de Staël was in a measure the cause of Lambert’s troubles. Masters and scholars threw her name at his head on the least provocation, either as a reproach or in irony. Louis was not long in getting himself sent to prison to keep me company. There, more truly at liberty than elsewhere, we could talk the livelong day in the quiet of the dormitories, where each pupil had a niche or cell six feet square, the partitions of which had iron gratings along the top,—the barred door being locked every night and opened every morning under the eye of the Father whose business it was to superintend our getting up and our going to bed. The creaking of those doors, handled with remarkable celerity by the dormitory servants, was one of the peculiarities of the college. These alcoves served as prisons; sometimes we were shut up in them for over a

month. The scholars in these cages were under the stern eye of the prefect, a sort of proctor, who entered the dormitories with a light foot, unexpectedly, to learn if we were talking instead of doing our penums. But a series of nut-shells spread on the stairway, or the trained quickness of our ears nearly always enabled us to be ready for him; so we gave ourselves up to our cherished studies without anxiety. Reading was of course impossible, and we spent the time in metaphysical discussions or in recalling curious facts connected with the phenomena of thought.

One of the most curious of these facts I will here relate, not only because it concerns Louis, but also because it may have determined his scientific destiny. According to the rule of colleges, Sunday and Thursday were holidays; but the church services, which we attended punctually, took up so much of Sunday that we regarded Thursday as our only real holiday. After mass, we had time enough to take long walks into the country around Vendôme. The manor of Rochambeau was the goal of our best excursions, perhaps because it was the farthest off. The *Petits* were seldom allowed to encounter the fatigue, but once or twice a year the regents offered them a day at Rochambeau as a reward. Toward the close of the spring of 1812 we were to go there for the first time. Our desire to see the famous château, whose proprietor sometimes gave milk to the pupils, kept us all good for a long time. Nothing hindered the excursion. Neither I nor Lambert had ever seen the pretty valley of the Loir, in which the

place is situated. His imagination and mine were therefore much preoccupied the evening before the walk, which was regarded among the scholars with traditional delight. We talked of it the whole evening, resolving to spend some money, which we possessed against the college rules, in fruit and milk.

We started at half-past twelve o'clock the next day, directly after dinner, each armed with a cubic piece of bread for his supper. Nimble as swallows, we walked in a group toward the famous castle, with an eagerness which left us no consciousness of fatigue. When we reached the hilltop, from which we could see the buildings on the descending slope and the tortuous valley where the river shone as it wound through dimpling meadow-lands, — a delightful landscape, one of those to which the keen emotions of early youth or love give such charm that they ought never to be revisited in after days, — Louis suddenly turned to me and said, "But I saw this last night in a dream!" He recognized the clump of trees under which we were then passing, the forms of the foliage, the color of the water, the towers of the castle, the foreground, the distance, — in short, all the details of the scene, which he now saw for the first time. We were thorough children (at least, I was at thirteen, but Louis at fifteen had the depth of a man of genius), and at this period of our lives we were incapable of deception in any word or act of our friendship. Though Lambert was conscious, through his omnipotence of thought, of the importance of such facts, he was far from even guessing

their full bearing; he was therefore much astonished at this one. I asked him if he had never been at Rochambeau in his infancy. My question struck him; but after ransacking his memory, he answered in the negative. This circumstance, whose counterpart may be found in the phenomena of sleep, will give an idea of Louis Lambert's earlier powers; from it he was able to deduce a system by taking, as did Cuvier in another order of things, a fragment of thought on which to reconstruct a whole creation.

We were sitting at the moment under the branches of an old oak. After a few moments' reflection Louis said: —

“If that landscape did not come to me, and it is absurd to suppose it did, then I must have come to it. If I was here when I was asleep in my bed, does not that fact constitute a separation between my body and my inward being? Does it not prove some unexplained faculty of locomotion in the mind, with results equivalent to those of the locomotion of the body? Now, if my mind and my body leave each other during sleep, why can I not also divorce them when awake? I see no middle ground between the two propositions. But to go further, let us look into details. Either these facts are accomplished by the power of some faculty which puts in operation a second being to which my body serves as a garment, — because I was in my bed and I saw the landscape (and this upsets many systems), — or these facts occurred either in some nervous centre whose name is still to be discovered, where feel-

ings take their rise, or in the cerebral centre where ideas are born. This last hypothesis raises many strange questions. I walked, I saw, I heard. Motion cannot be conceived of without space; sound acts only in angles or upon surfaces; color cannot exist without light. If I saw within myself during the night, my eyes being closed, certain colored objects, if I heard sounds in total silence and without the conditions required for sound to form, if, while absolutely motionless, I have crossed space, I must have internal faculties which are independent of external physical law. How is it that men have reflected so little about the events of sleep which show them that they have a double life? Is there not a dawning science in that phenomenon?" he added, striking his forehead. "If it is not the germ of a science it certainly reveals extraordinary powers in man; it shows, at least, a frequent disunion of our two natures, — a fact round which my mind is constantly revolving. At last I have obtained an evidence of the superiority of our latent senses over our manifest senses! *homo duplex!* — "But," he continued after a pause, with a gesture of hesitation, "perhaps there are not two natures in us; perhaps we are only gifted with inward perfectible qualities, the exercise and development of which produce within us dual phenomena of activity and penetration of vision hitherto unstudied. In our love for the marvellous, a passion bred of pride, we have perhaps transformed such effects into poetic creations because we cannot comprehend them. It is so convenient to

defy the incomprehensible ! Ah ! I own I should weep for the loss of my illusions, I need to believe in a dual nature and in the angels of Swedenborg ! Must the new science kill them ? Yes, a search into our unknown attributes and faculties implies a science apparently materialistic ; for SPIRIT uses, divides, and vivifies substance, but never destroys it."

He remained thoughtful and half-melancholy. Perhaps he saw that the dreams of his youth were swaddling-clothes he was called upon to lay aside.

"Sight and hearing," he said, with a laugh at his own saying, "are no doubt the sheath of some marvellous tool."

At all times when he talked to me of heaven and hell, he would gaze at nature with the eye of a master ; but as he said these last words, big with science, he hovered more commandingly than ever above the landscape, and his brow seemed to me about to burst with the efforts of his genius ; his forces, which we must call *moral* until the new order dawns, appeared to gush from the organs appointed to propel them ; his eyes shot forth his thought, his lifted hand, his mute and trembling lips gave utterance to it, his eye shone radiant ; and then his head, as if too heavy, or wearied by the violent impulsion of his spirit, dropped upon his breast. The child, the giant, bowed himself down, took my hand, pressed it in his own moist palm fevered with the quest for truth, and then, after a pause, he said : —

"I shall be famous — and you too," he added

quickly. "We shall both be the chemists of the Will."

Exquisite heart! I recognized his superiority, but he was ever careful not to let me feel it. He shared with me the treasures of his thought, counted me for something in all his discoveries, and gave me in my own right the value of my immature reflections. Gracious and winning as a loving woman, he had all those chastities of feeling, those delicacies of soul, which make life sweet and easy to bear.

The next day he began a work which he entitled a "Treatise on the Will." His reflections often changed both plan and method, but the event which I have just recorded of this solemn day was assuredly the germ of the work, just as the electric sensation felt by Mesmer at the approach of a certain valet was the origin of his discoveries in magnetism,—a science hidden in the mysteries of Isis and Delphos and the cave of Trophonius, and rediscovered by that wonderful man, the equal of Lavater and the precursor of Gall. Lighted by this sudden illumination, Lambert's ideas took a wider sweep; he disentangled from his mental acquisitions certain scattered truths and gathered them together; then, like a worker in bronze, he moulded his group. After six months of steady application, Louis's toil excited the curiosity of our comrades, and was made the butt of cruel jokes which led finally to a disastrous issue.

One day our chief persecutor, determined to read our manuscripts, instigated some of our other tyrants

to seize the box which contained the treasure, which Louis and I defended with unexampled courage. The box was locked, and our aggressors were unable to open it; but they tried to break it in the struggle, — a dastardly wrong which made us shout with anger. A few of our schoolmates, moved to justice or struck with our heroic resistance, advised the others, in a spirit of contemptuous pity, to let us alone. Suddenly, however, attracted by the fray, Father Haugoult came upon the scene, and inquired into the cause of it. Our adversaries had stopped us while doing our pensums, and the master at first defended us. The assailants, to excuse themselves, betrayed the existence of our secret writings. The terrible Haugoult ordered us to give him the box. If we had resisted he would certainly have broken it open; Lambert therefore gave him the key; the regent took the papers, turned them over for a few moments, and then said, as he confiscated them:

“So this is the stuff for which you neglect your themes!”

Big tears rolled from Lambert's eyes, forced out as much by a sense of insulted mental superiority as by the gratuitous injury and treachery which overwhelmed us. We darted a look of reproach at our betrayers; they had sold us to the common enemy! Our opponents had a right to fight us under the schoolboy code, but they were bound to keep silence as to our college faults. They themselves felt a momentary shame. In all probability Father Haugoult sold the “Treatise on the Will” as so much waste-paper to

some grocer in Vendôme, never imagining the value of the scientific treasures whose still-born germs were thus scattered by the hands of ignorance. Six months later I left college. I do not know whether Louis Lambert, who was plunged into deep despondency by our separation, ever renewed the work.

In memory of the catastrophe that befel Louis's treatise I used, in the volume which begins these Philosophical Studies, the heading really chosen by Lambert as the title of a fictitious work; and I also gave the name of a woman who was dear to him to a young girl in that book whose life was self-devotion.¹ But these loans are not all I owe him. His character, his employments, were most useful to me in composing that book, the subject of which is an outcome of our youthful meditations. The present History is intended as a humble monument to the life of one who bequeathed to me all his wealth — his thought.

In that first child-work Lambert laid down his ideas on Man. Ten years later, meeting scientific men engaged in studying the phenomena which had struck our youthful minds, and which Lambert so miraculously analyzed, I comprehended the importance of his labors, then almost forgotten as a childish feat. I resolved to spend several months in recalling the chief discoveries of my poor comrade. After gathering my recollections together, I can affirm that in 1812 he had foreseen, discussed, and established in his treatise several impor-

¹ *La Peau de Chagrin* (The Magic Skin).

tant facts, the proofs of which, as he then said to me, would come sooner or later. His philosophical speculations ought certainly to place him among the great thinkers who appear at intervals among their fellow-men to make known the bare elements of a coming science, whose roots, slow in developing growth, bear noble fruits at last in the domain of intellect. Thus, in the sixteenth century, a poor artisan named Bernard, searching the soil for the secret of enamel, asserted, with the infallible authority of genius, the very geological facts whose demonstration is now the glory of Buffon and of Cuvier. I believe I can present an idea of Louis Lambert's treatise by stating the main propositions on which it was based; but, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary, I fear I shall denude them of the ideas with which he clothed them, and which are indeed their indispensable accompaniment. Pursuing a path of thought other than his, I selected from among his researches those results which best suited the needs of my own system. I am therefore doubtful — I, his disciple — if I can faithfully reproduce his thoughts after having assimilated them in a manner which may have colored them with mine.

New ideas need new words, or old words in wider and better defined acceptations. To express the bases of his system, Louis Lambert had therefore chosen certain words in common use which responded already, though vaguely, to his thought. The word *WILL* served to express the medium in which *thought* is evolved; or, to use a less abstract form of expression, the volume of

force by which man reproduces outside of himself the actions which make up his external existence. VOLITION (a word we owe to the reflections of Locke) expressed the act by which a man makes use of Will. The word THOUGHT, to Louis the quintessential product of the Will, designated also the medium in which are born IDEAS, to which the Will serves as substance. The IDEA, not common to all creations of the brain, constitutes the act by which man makes use of *Thought*.

Thus Will and Thought are two generating agents. Volition and Idea are the two products. Will seemed to him the Idea advanced from its abstract condition to a concrete condition, from its fluid generation to a quasi-solid expression, if indeed these words can formulate perceptions so difficult to discriminate. According to Lambert, Thought and Ideas are the motion and the action of our inward organism, just as Volition and Will are those of our exterior being. He placed Will above Thought. "To think, we must needs will," he said. "Many persons live in a condition of Willing who never reach the condition of Thought. In the North we find longevity, in the South brevity of life; but also in the former a torpidity, in the latter an excitation of the Will, up to the point where, either from extreme heat or extreme cold, the organs become almost nugatory.

His expression "medium" was suggested to him by an observation made in early childhood, — the importance of which he certainly did not then suspect, though its curious singularity must have greatly struck

his impressible imagination. His mother, a slender, high-strung creature, all delicacy and all love, was one of those beings predestined to represent Woman in the perfection of her attributes whom a blind fate leaves in the lower strata of the social state. All-loving, consequently all-suffering, she died young, after turning every faculty into motherly devotion. Lambert, a child of six, lying awake in a cot by his mother's bed, saw electric sparks escaping from her hair as she combed it. The man of fifteen seized upon this fact so amusing to his childhood, and put it to the uses of science, — an undeniable fact, to be observed in almost every woman whom a certain fatality of destiny burdens with feelings misunderstood which need a vent, or with a superabundance of vigor which she needs to lose.

In support of his definitions, Lambert brought forward several problems for solution, splendid challenges offered to science, through which he hoped to reach conclusions. He was constantly asking himself, "Does the constituent principle of electricity enter as a basis into the particular fluid from which Ideas and Volitions spring? Does the hair which discolours, brightens, falls, and disappears from the head, according to varying degrees of waste or of crystallization of thought, constitute a capillary system either absorbent or exhalant, and wholly electrical? Are the fluid phenomena of our Will (a substance procreated within us and spontaneously reactive at the bidding of conditions still unobserved) more extraordinary than those of the invisible and intangible fluid produced by a voltaic battery

on the nervous system of a dead man? Is the formation of our ideas, and their constant emission any less incomprehensible than the evaporation of those corpuscles, imperceptible to the eye yet violent in action, to which a grain of musk is subjected without losing its weight? If we leave to the cutaneous system of our outward man only those functions that are defensive, absorbent, exudant, and tactile, does not the circulation of the blood and its apparatus answer to the transubstantiation of Will, just as the circulation of the nervous fluid answers to that of Thought? Finally, does the influence, more or less powerful, of these two substances result from a certain perfection or imperfection of organs, the conditions of which ought to be studied in all their manifestation?

These principles once established, he desired to class the phenomena of human life in two series of distinct effects, —demanding for each of them, with the insistent ardor of conviction, a separate and special analysis. In fact, after distinguishing in nearly all created things two separate movements, he presented the fact and admitted it among those of human nature, naming this vital antagonism ACTION and REACTION.

“A desire,” he said, “is a fact wholly accomplished within our Will before it reaches external accomplishment. Thus the conjunction of our Volitions and our Ideas constitutes *Action*, and the conjunction of our exterior acts *Reaction*.”

When, at a later day, I read the observations made by Bichat on the dualism of our external senses, I was

bewildered by recollections as I perceived the startling identity between the ideas of the great physiologist and those of Louis Lambert. Dying before their allotted time, the two had walked with even steps, side by side, towards unknown truths. Nature finds pleasure in giving duplicate destinies to diverse constitutional arrangements in her creatures, and the double action of our organism, a fact no longer contestable, supports, with a volume of daily proof, Lambert's deductions as to *Action* and *Reaction*. The *acting* or interior being (a term which Louis used to name the unknown *species*, the mysterious assemblage of fibrils from which proceed the different powers incompletely observed as Thought and Will, — in short, that unnamed, seeing, acting, producing being, who accomplishes all without corporeal demonstration) must, in order to conform to his own nature, be subjected to none of the physical conditions by which the *reacting*, or exterior, being, the visible man, is checked in his manifestations.

From this flowed a multitude of logical explanations on the apparently fantastic effects of our double nature, and the rectification of various theories which are equally false and true. Certain minds having perceived the phenomena of natural fire in the *acting* being are, like Swedenborg, carried beyond the world of actual things by their ardent souls, amorous of poesy, drunk with the essence of the divine. They delight, ignorant as they are of causes while admiring results, to deify this inward being and its works, and to build up a mystic universe. Hence the angels, — ex-

quisite illusions which Lambert would not renounce. While the blade of his analysis cut off their dazzling wings, he still clasped them to his heart.

“Heaven,” he said to me, “must be the survival of our perfected faculties, and hell the nothingness into which unperfected faculties return.”

But how, during the ages when human understanding still retained the religious and spiritual impressions which ruled the world between the times of Christ and of Descartes, between Faith and Doubt, how could the mind avoid explaining the mysteries of our inward nature otherwise than by Divine intervention? Of whom, if not of God himself, could learned men ask an explanation of the invisible creature, so actively and so reactively sensitive; endowed with faculties so wide-reaching, so perfectible through use, so powerful under the control of certain occult conditions, that at times they saw it, by a phenomenon of sight or of locomotion, abolish space in its two aspects of Time and Distance, — the former being intellectual space, the latter physical space. Or again, they saw this being reconstruct the past, either by the power of a retrospective glance, or by the mystery of a palingenesis, like that which enables a man to trace a flower from the germ, or the teguments of a seed through all the innumerable modifications of color, fragrance, and form of its anterior bloom. And still again, and finally, they saw it divining imperfectly the future, either through a glimpse of the earlier faiths, or by a phenomenon of physical presentiments.

Other men, less poetically religious, cold reasoners, charlatans perhaps, enthusiasts, if at all, by the brain rather than by the heart, observing from time to time these isolated phenomena, have held them to be true without considering them as radiations from a common centre. Each man sought to convert a simple fact into a science. Hence, demonology, judicial astrology, sorcery, — in short, all the divining arts based on incidents that were essentially transitory because they varied according to temperaments and in accordance with circumstances still wholly unexplained. But through these errors of the learned, and from ecclesiastical trials in which so many martyrs were the victims of their own faculties, there came at last effulgent proof of the prodigious power of the *acting* inward being who, according to Lambert, is able to isolate himself so completely from the *reacting* external being that he can burst the shell and force the walls of flesh to open before his omnipotent mind's eye (a phenomenon called among the Hindoos the *Tokeiad*), and then, by virtue of another faculty, seize within the brain, in spite of its thick convolutions, ideas which are formed or forming, and all the past experience of consciousness.

“If apparitions are not impossible,” said Lambert, “they must take place through some faculty of apprehending the ideas that represent man in his pure essence; the existence of which, imperishable perhaps, eludes our exterior senses, but may become perceptible to the inward being when he attains to a high degree of ecstasy, or to a rare perfection of sight.”

I recall, though now somewhat vaguely, that Lambert, following step by step the effects of Thought and Will in all their manifestations, after first determining their laws, was able to account for a crowd of phenomena which till then were justly thought to be incomprehensible. Necromancers, witches, those possessed of second-sight, and demoniacs of all kinds, victims of the Middle Ages, were the objects of natural explanation whose very simplicity seemed to me to bear the stamp of truth. The marvellous gifts which the Church of Rome, jealous of mysteries, punished with the stake were, according to Louis, the result of certain affinities between the constituent principles of Matter and those of Thought, which proceed from the same source. The man with the hazel wand who found the water-springs obeyed the impulse of some sympathy, or some antipathy, to himself unknown. Such phenomena needed a certain fantasticality to give them historical preservation. Sympathies are seldom verified. They bestow pleasures which persons fortunately endowed with them seldom make known, unless through some special necessity; they are lost in the seclusion of privacy where so much is forgotten. On the other hand, antipathies, which result from reversed affinities, have been noted with great distinctness when they appear among celebrated men. Bayle was thrown into convulsions by the sound of falling water. Scaliger turned pale at the sight of cress. Erasmus took a fever from the smell of fish. These three antipathies emanated from aquatic substances. The Duc d'Épernon fainted

at the sight of a hare ; Tycho-Brahe at that of a fox ; Henri III. at that of a cat ; Maréchal d'Albret at that of a wild boar, — antipathies produced by animal emanations and perceived often at long distances. The Chevalier de Guise, Marie de Medici, and many other historic personages were made ill by roses, even painted ones. Whether Francis Bacon knew or did not know of an approaching eclipse of the moon, he fell into a state of coma when it took place ; life was arrested during the whole time the obscuration lasted, but recovered vigor when it was over, without any uncomfortable results. These effects of authentic antipathies, taken at random from those which history has noted, will suffice to give an idea of the effects of hidden sympathies.

This fragment of Lambert's investigations which my memory still retains will serve to show his methods in pursuing his work. I think I need not call attention to the correlation which links this theory to the collateral sciences invented by Gall and Lavater ; they are its natural corollaries ; and minds of even slender scientific attainments will perceive the ramifications by which the phrenological observations of the one and the physiological data of the other are necessarily attached to it. Mesmer's discovery, so important and so ill-understood even at the present day, would have been found entire in Lambert's treatise, though Louis knew nothing of the somewhat laconic works of the celebrated Swiss doctor. A logical and simple deduction of the principles he had observed showed him that Will could, by a movement set going solely by the inward being, accumulate itself

and, by another movement, be impelled outward, and even be imparted to material objects. Thus a man's whole force had potency to react upon others and to infuse into them an essence foreign to their own, if they did not defend themselves from the aggression. The evidences of this theorem of the science of humanity are multitudinous, but nothing has yet converted them into authentic proof. The impressive disaster of Marius and his speech to the Cimbrian who was appointed to kill him, or the august command of a mother to the Lion of Florence were needed to make known historically a few of these thunderbolts of thought.

To Lambert, therefore, Will and Thought were *living forces*; and he spoke of them in a way to make me share his beliefs. To him these powers were, in a sense, visible and tangible. To him Thought was slow or quick, heavy or nimble, obscure or clear; he gave it all the qualities of active being; made it spring forth, become quiescent, re-awake, increase, grow old, shrink, wither, revive; he caught its life as he thus specified its acts through the capricious medium of language; he apprehended its spontaneity, its vigor, its capacity, by a sort of intuition which enabled him to recognize all the phenomena of the substance.

"Often," he once said to me, "in calm and silent hours, when our inward faculties are asleep, when we yield ourselves up to the sweetness of rest, when a species of shadow steals through us, and we fall into contemplation of external things, an idea suddenly springs forth and darts with the rapidity of lightning across

vast spaces, a sight of which is granted to our interior perceptions. This shining thought, up-springing like a will-o'-the-wisp, goes out like a flash and returns no more, — ephemeral existence, like that of infants whose coming and whose going give boundless joy and grief to parents, — a flower still-born, as it were, in the fields of Mind. Sometimes, instead of gushing forth and dying without substance, this Idea begins to form; it stirs on the unknown confines of the organs in which it was generated; it consumes us with a long gestation; it quickens, fructifies, and develops outwardly with the grace of youth and the attributes of old age; it attracts and detains the inquiring eye, and never wearies it; the investigation it provokes commands the admiring wonder given to long-elaborated works. Sometimes ideas come to birth in swarms, — one brings forth another; they link together; they are stimulating, affluent, headlong. Or again, they rise up pallid, confused, perishing for want of nourishment or vigor; the generating substance was lacking. Then, too, on certain days, they fling themselves into the depths of the abyss, seeking to cast light into its immensity; they terrify us, they leave our souls exhausted. Ideas are a system complete within us, like any of the kingdoms of Nature, — a sort of flora whose iconography will one day be traced out by a man of genius whom the world will call a lunatic. Yes, all things, within us and without us, bear evidence to the life of Ideas, — those ravishing creations which, obeying some mysterious revelation of their nature, I compare to flowers. Their production, as the

end and aim of man, is not more amazing than the emanation of perfume and color from a plant. Possibly, perfumes have ideas. When we think that the line where our flesh ends and the finger-nails begin contains the invisible and inexplicable mystery of the ceaseless transformation of our fluids into horn, we must admit that nothing is impossible in the marvellous mutations of human substance. Surely we find in the moral nature phenomena of motion and gravity similar to those of the physical nature. The emotion of *expectant attention*, to choose an example which everybody has felt, is painful through the effect of a law in virtue of which the weight of a body is multiplied by its swiftness. Does not the weight of sentiment, the moral gravity, which *waiting* produces increase by the constant addition of the past pains to present pain? To what, if not to some electric substance, can we attribute that magic by force of which the Will sits majestically enthroned in the eye to blast all obstacles at the command of genius, or breaks forth in the voice, or filters visibly, in defiance of hypocrisy, through the human cuticle? The current of this king of fluids, which, under the high pressure of Thought or Sentiment, flows forth in waves, lessens to a thread, or gathers to a volume and gushes forth in lightning jets, is the occult minister to whom we owe the efforts (be they fatal or beneficent) of the arts and the passions, — the intonations of the voice, rough, sweet, terrifying, lascivious, horrible, seductive, which vibrate in the heart, in the bowels, in the brain, at the will of our wishes; the spell of touch from which

proceed the mental transfusions of artists whose creative hands, made perfect through passionate study, can evoke nature ; the endless gradations of the eye, passing from sluggish atony to the discharge of lightning-flashes full of menace. God loses none of his rights in this system. Thought, material thought, tells me of new and undiscovered grandeurs in the Divine."

When he spoke thus — when his glance penetrated my soul like light itself—it was difficult not to be dazzled by his conviction and carried away by his arguments. Thus THOUGHT seemed to my mind a purely physical power attended by its incommensurable progeny. It was a new Humanity under another form. This rapid sketch of the laws which Lambert declared to be the formulæ of the human intellect must suffice to show the prodigious activity with which his mind fed upon itself. He sought for evidence of his theories in the history of great men, whose lives, laid bare in biographies, furnish many curious particulars as to the working of their understandings. His memory enabled him to recall facts which helped to develop his assertions, and he annexed them to the several chapters which they demonstrated, so that many of his axioms acquired a certainty that was well-nigh mathematical. The works of Cardan, a man gifted with remarkable powers of vision, afforded him precious material. He forgot neither Apollonius of Tyana, announcing to Asia the tyrant's death and describing his execution at the very hour when it took place in Rome ; nor Plotinus, separated from Porphyrius yet conscious of the latter's

intention to kill himself, and rushing to dissuade him ; nor a fact clearly proved in the last century, in spite of a sneering incredulity such as truth had never before encountered, — a surprising fact to those accustomed to use doubt as a weapon against itself only, yet simple enough to a believer : Alphonse-Maria de Liguori, Bishop of Saint Agatha, gave the consolations of religion to Pope Ganganelli, who saw, heard, and answered him ; yet at that very moment the bishop was far from Rome, seated, absorbed in ecstasy, in the arm-chair which he always occupied on his return from mass. When he came to himself he saw the servants kneeling around him, and thinking he was dead. “ My friends,” he said to them, “ the Holy Father has just expired.” Two days later, a courier confirmed the news. The moment of the pope’s death coincided with that at which the bishop recovered from his trance.

Neither did Lambert overlook a more recent affair which happened in the last century to a young English-woman, who, being passionately in love with a sailor, started from London to search for him, and alone, without a guide, found him in the wilds of North America, where she arrived in time to save his life. Louis laid under contribution the mysteries of antiquity, the acts of the martyrs (noblest claims to glory of the human will), the demonologists of the Middle Ages, criminal trials, medical researches, — discerning the essential fact, the probable phenomenon, with admirable sagacity.

This rich collection of scientific anecdotes, gathered from a multitude of books for the most part trust-

worthy, went, no doubt, to wrap groceries ; and a work, curious to say the least, conceived and brought forth by the most extraordinary of human memories, probably perished. Among the many proofs which enriched it was the history of an event which happened in Lambert's family, and which he had related to me before undertaking his treatise. This circumstance, concerning the *post-existence* of the inward being (if I may allow myself to coin a word to express a yet unnamed condition), struck me so forcibly that I have always remembered it.

His father and mother were threatened with a suit the loss of which would cast a stain upon their integrity, the sole property they possessed. Consequently, their anxiety was great in deciding the question as to whether they should yield at once to the unjust demands of their opponent, or whether they should risk all and defend themselves. The discussion took place one autumn evening, before a peat fire, in the chamber of the tanner and his wife. A few of the family relations were called in to the consultation ; among them Louis's maternal great-grandfather, an old laborer completely broken-down, of a noble and majestic countenance, a clear eye, and an ample brow yellowed with age, on which a few white hairs were sparsely straggling. Like the Obi of the negroes, or the Sagamore of the Indians, he was a kind of oracular spirit, consulted on all great occasions. His lands were cultivated by his grandchildren, who fed and cared for him. He foretold rains and fair weather, told them when to gather the

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harvest, and when to mow the meadows. The barometric accuracy of his counsel grew famous, and constantly increased the faith and reverence which were shown to him. He sometimes sat motionless on his chair for days together. This trance condition was customary with the old man since the death of his wife, for whom he had felt the deepest and most constant affection. The discussion now went on before him without his apparently paying much attention to it. "My children," he said, when asked to give his advice, "this matter is too serious for me to decide alone, I must consult my wife." He then rose, took his stick and went out, to the great surprise of all present, who thought, for a moment, that he had become childish. Presently he returned and said: "I was not obliged to go so far as the cemetery, your mother met me; I found her beside the brook. She tells me that you will find receipts in the hands of a notary at Blois which will enable you to win your suit." The words were uttered in a firm voice. The attitude and expression of the old man were such as to make the spectators conclude that the apparition was customary with him. As a matter of fact, the disputed receipts were found, and the suit was not even brought.

This circumstance, happening under the paternal roof and under Louis's own eye, he being then nine years old, contributed not a little to his belief in the miraculous visions of Swedenborg, who afforded during his extraordinary life many proofs of the power of vision acquired by his *inward being*. As Lambert grew in years, and

in proportion to the development of his intellect, he was led to search the laws of human nature for the causes of the miracle he had witnessed in his childhood. By what name must we call the accident which brought about him the facts and the books relating to such phenomena, and made the youth himself the theatre and the actor of the greatest miracles of thought? If Louis had no other claim to glory than that of having, at the age of fifteen, given forth the following psychological axiom, we must still, I think, have mourned in him the loss of a genius equal to that of Pascal, Lavoisier, or Laplace. "The events," he said, "which evidence the action of Humanity, and are the product of its intellect, have causes within which they are preconceived, — just as our actions are accomplished in our thought before they are reproduced outside of us; presentiments or prophecies are precognitions of these causes."

Perhaps his phantasy about angels may have too long influenced his labors; but let us remember it was in searching how to make gold that learned men unconsciously created chemistry; nevertheless, later, when Lambert studied comparative anatomy, physics, geometry, and the sciences connected with his discoveries, he necessarily intended to assemble facts and proceed by analysis, — the sole torch which to-day can guide us through the obscurities of the least comprehensible of phenomena. He had certainly too much sense to remain forever in the clouds of theories which could all be formulated in a few words. To-day the simplest demonstration which rests on facts is far more valuable

than the finest systems supported by inductions more or less ingenious. But as I was not with him during the period of his life when he must have thought and reflected to most profit, I can only conjecture the course of his labors from what I knew of his earlier meditations.

It is easy to see in what respect his "Treatise on the Will" was defective. Already gifted with the qualities which distinguish remarkable men, he was nevertheless still a child. Though skilful and affluent in abstract thought, his brain was still influenced by the fascinating beliefs that float around all youthful spirits. Consequently his conception attained to the ripe fruits of genius at certain points, while at a multitude of others it remained in the undeveloped state of germs. To minds amorous of poetry his greatest defect would have seemed the lack of a certain unction. His work bore marks of the struggle that went on in his glorious soul between the two great principles of Spiritualism and Materialism; round which the noblest minds have hovered, without daring to blend them into one. Purely spiritualistic at first, Louis was irresistibly led to recognize the materialism of thought. Beaten back by the facts of analysis at the moment when his heart made him gaze with love at the scattered clouds in the heaven of Swedenborg, he had not yet the ability to produce a compact, homogeneous system, run at one casting. From this incapacity came several contradictions, which appear even in the sketch I have made of his earliest efforts. Yet, however in-

complete his work, it was surely the rough draft of a science of which, later, he would have fathomed the mysteries, settled the foundations, searched out, deduced, and connected the developments.

Six months after the confiscation of the "Treatise on the Will," I left college. Our separation was abrupt. My mother, alarmed by a feverish condition which persistently clung to me and to which my bodily inaction gave symptoms of coma, took me away from Vendôme at four or five hours' notice. When Lambert heard of my departure he fell into a state of alarming depression. We hid ourselves to weep together.

"I shall never see you again," he said to me in his gentle voice as he pressed me in his arms. "You will live," he added, "but I shall die. I will appear to you if I can."

We must be young indeed to utter such words in a tone of conviction which compels their acceptance as a prophecy, as a promise, whose fulfilment is ever to be expected with awe. For a long subsequent time I thought vaguely of this pledged apparition; I still have days of spleen, doubt, terror, or solitude, when I am forced to drive away the recollection of that melancholy farewell; which, however, was destined not to be our last. When I crossed the courtyard on my way out, Lambert's face was pressed to a barred window in the refectory that he might see me pass. At my request my mother asked permission for him to dine with us at the inn. That evening I took him back to

the fatal threshold of the college. Lover and mistress never shed more tears at parting than we did.

"Farewell; I shall be alone in this desert," he said, pointing to the courtyard where scores of lads were shouting and playing. "When I come back wearied, half-dead, from my long journeys through the fields of thought, on whose heart shall I rest? A glance sufficed to tell thee all. Who now will comprehend me? Adieu; would I had never met thee! I should not then know all that I am now to lose."

"And I," I said, "what will become of me? My condition will be dreadful; *I* have nothing here to console me," I added, striking my forehead.

He shook his head with a movement full of grace and sadness, and we parted.

At this period of his life Louis Lambert was five feet two inches in height, and he grew no taller. His face, becoming more and more expressive, gave evidence to the sweetness of his nature. A divine patience, born of harsh treatment, the perpetual concentration of mind required by his contemplative habits, had taken from his glance the daring pride with which he formerly annihilated the regent. His features shone with peaceful feeling, with a sweet serenity which no ridicule, no irony could ever change; for his natural kindness tempered his consciousness of his powers and his superiority. He had handsome hands with tapering fingers, nearly always moist. His body was a marvel of beauty worthy of sculpture; though, alas, our iron-gray uniforms with their short breeches gave us so awkward an appearance

that the perfection of Lambert's proportions and the soft suppleness of his attitudes were seen only while he bathed. When swimming in our cove of the Loir, Louis was distinguished from the rest of us by the whiteness of his skin, which contrasted with the various flesh-tints of his comrades, often mottled by the cold air, or purpled by the water. Delicate in shape, graceful in attitude, softly colored, never shivering as he left the water (perhaps because he avoided shade and ran about in the sun), Louis was like those provident flowers which close their petals to the north-wind and only bloom when the sky is clear. He ate very little, and drank water only. Either by instinct or from choice, he was chary of all movement which required an expenditure of strength; his gestures were few and simple, like those of the Orientals or the Indian nations, in whom gravity appears to be a second nature. As a general thing he did not like whatever savored of particular care for his own person. He leaned his head so habitually on his left hand, the elbow resting on a table, that the sleeves of a new coat were speedily in holes. To this faint portrait of the outward man I ought to add a sketch of his moral nature, for I believe myself capable to-day of judging it impartially.

Though naturally religious, Louis did not share in the minute observances of the Roman Church; his ideas were more particularly in sympathy with those of Saint Theresa, Fénelon, several of the Fathers, and a few saints who would be treated in our day as heretics or atheists. He was unmoved during the church

services. Prayer, with him, proceeded from an impulse, a movement and elevation of the spirit which followed no regular course; in all things he gave himself up to nature, and would neither pray nor think at settled periods. It is likely that in chapel he thought of God as often as he pondered some philosophical difficulty. Jesus Christ was to him the type of his system. *Et verbum caro factum est* was to him a sublime utterance intended to express the traditional formula of Will, Word, and Action made visible. Christ not discerning his own death; having so perfected his inward being through divine works that its invisible form became, one day, manifest to his disciples; the mysteries of the Gospel, the magnetic cures performed by Christ, and the gift of tongues, — all served to confirm his doctrine. I remember to have heard him say, in this connection, that the noblest work to be done in the present day would be a history of the Primitive Church. He was never, to my knowledge, so far uplifted towards poesy as in a conversation which led him one evening to examine the miracles performed by the power of Will during that grand epoch of Faith. He found the strongest proofs of his theory in the martyrdoms of the first century, which he called the “great era of thought.”

- “The phenomena which happened during many of the tortures so heroically borne by the Christians to establish their faith, go to prove,” he said, “that material force will never prevail against the power of ideas nor against the will of man. Each one of us

may accept this effect produced by the will of all as evidence in favor of our own."

I think I ought not to speak of Louis Lambert's ideas on poetry and on history, nor of his judgments as to the masterpieces of our language. It is scarcely worth while to record here opinions which have now become common property, but which in the mouth of a child at the time he uttered them would have seemed extraordinary. Louis was abreast of all. To express his gifts in one sentence, I will say that he could have written *Zadig* as brilliantly as Voltaire, and thought out the dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates as vigorously as Montesquieu. The extreme rectitude of his ideas made him desire usefulness above all else in a work, just as the delicacy of his mind craved novelty of thought as much as novelty of form. Whatever did not fulfil these conditions caused him actual disgust. One of his most remarkable literary estimates — and one which may perhaps serve to show the character as well as the lucidity of his judgments — was the following, which has always remained fastened in my memory: "The *Apocalypse* is ecstasy written down." He considered the Bible as a part of the traditional history of antediluvian peoples, which was shared with the new Humanity. To him, the mythology of the Greeks was linked with the Hebrew Bible and with the sacred books of India, all of which the Hellenes, worshippers of grace, had translated after their fashion.

"It is impossible," he said, "to question the priority of the Asiatic Scriptures to our Holy Scriptures. To

all who admit this historical fact in good faith the world enlarges wonderfully. It was on the table-lands of Asia that the few men who may have survived the great catastrophe of our globe took refuge, — if indeed humanity existed after the shock of that cataclysm; a serious question, whose answer lies in the depths of ocean. The anthropology of the Bible is but the genealogy of a swarm of human bees, issuing from their hive and clinging to the mountainous flanks of Thibet, between the summits of the Himalaya and those of the Caucasus. The character of the first ideas of the horde named by its law-giver the People of God (doubtless to give it unity, and possibly to force it to preserve his own laws and system of government, — for the books of Moses are a code, religious, civil, and political) is stamped with fear; the convulsion of the globe is held to be a vengeance from on high, working through gigantic thoughts. Deprived of the peaceful joys of a people inhabiting a patriarchal land, the sorrows of the wandering nation taught them a sombre, majestic, and blood-thirsty poetry. On the other hand, the sight of earth's quick reparations, the marvellous effects of the sun, first witnessed by the Hindus, inspired the Orient peoples, with their smiling conceptions of happy love, fire-worship, and the endless personifications of reproduction. Those magnificent images are lacking to the Hebrews. A constant necessity for preservation amid the dangers and distances to be traversed to the land of promise begot the feeling of exclusiveness among the peculiar people, and their hatred to other nations.

These three Scriptures are the archives of an ingulfed world. In them lies the secret of the untold grandeur of their languages and their myths. A vast human history is buried beneath these names of men and places, beneath these fictions, which we cling to irresistibly, yet without knowing why. Perhaps in their presence we breathe the native air of our new humanity."

To Louis this triple literature contained all the thoughts of man. "No book," he said, "was ever written whose germ does not lie there." This opinion shows how learned and how profound were his first studies of the Bible, and the distance to which they led him. Ever soaring above social existence, of which he knew nothing except through books, he judged it coolly. "Laws," he said, "never interfere with the enterprises of the rich and great; they strike the feeble, who ought, on the contrary, to be protected."

Thus his natural kindliness kept him from sympathy with political ideas; yet his system led to that passive obedience whose exemplar was Jesus Christ. During the latter period of my stay at Vendôme, Louis no longer felt a spur to fame; he had, in a certain way, abstractly experienced it, and after cutting it open, like the priests of ancient sacrifice seeking portents in the hearts of human victims, he had found nothing in the womb of that chimera. Despising, therefore, a sentiment so wholly personal, he once said to me, "Fame is deified egoism."

Before leaving this period of an exceptional childhood I ought perhaps to offer a judgment upon it.

Some time before our separation Louis said to me : " Apart from those general laws, the formulation of which may one day bring me fame, and which must necessarily be those of our organism, man's life is a movement determined in each individual at the bidding of some hidden influence or impulse, either of the Brain, the Heart, or the Nerves. From those three systems, represented by three common words, the endless types of Humanity are derived, all of which result from the proportion in which the three generating principles are more or less thoroughly combined with the substances which they assimilate in the centres where they exist." He stopped short, struck his forehead and exclaimed, " Strange fact ! all the great men whose portraits I have seen are short-necked. Perhaps Nature decreed that in them the heart should be nearer the brain." Presently he resumed, " From this comes a certain uniformity of action which makes up social existence. To the man of Nerve, Action, — that is, force ; to the man of Brain, Genius ; to the man of Heart, Faith. But," he added, sadly, " to Faith, the Clouds of the Sanctuary ; to the Angel alone comes LIGHT." Taking his own definitions, Lambert was all heart and all brain.

To me, the life of his mind is divided into three phases.

Urged from his infancy to precocious activity, caused no doubt by some malady or some perfection of his organs, his forces concentrated themselves on the working of his inward faculties and on the superabun-

dant production of the nervous fluid. A creature of ideas, he sought to quench the thirst of a brain which longed to assimilate all ideas. Hence, his reading, and from his reading his reflections, which gave him power to reduce things to their simplest expression, to absorb them within himself that he might study them in their essence. The benefits of this magnificent period of his mind's training, which come to other men only as the result of long study, fell to Louis during his bodily childhood, — a happy childhood, colored with the studious felicities of a poem. The limit which most brains attain was the point of departure from which his was one day to start in search of new regions of intelligence. He thus created for himself, without as yet knowing what he did, the most exacting of lives, and the most insatiable. Merely to exist, he was forced to throw incessant nourishment into the gulf he had opened within him. Like certain beings of the mundane regions, he was liable to perish for want of nutriment to intemperate and balked appetites. Was it not, in fact, a debauchery of the soul, which might bring it, like certain bodies saturated with alcohol, to spontaneous combustion?

This earliest mental phase I knew nothing of. Not until the present day have I explained to myself its amazing fructifications and results. Lambert was then thirteen years old.

I was fortunate enough to be with him in the first years of the second stage, during which Lambert (and it may have been this that saved him) endured all the

wretchedness of school life and expended the superabundance of his thought. After passing from things to their simplest terms, from words to their ideal substance, from that substance to principles, — in short, after abstracting all, he still aspired, as a necessity of life, to other intellectual creations. Subdued by his college sufferings and by the crises of his physical life, he continued meditative, divined feelings, foresaw new sciences and vast masses of ideas. Checked in his course, and too feeble as yet to contemplate the upper spheres, his eyes turned inward in self-contemplation. He showed me then the struggle of thought reacting against itself, and seeking to discover the secrets of its own nature, as a doctor studies the progress of his own malady. In this state of strength and weakness, childlike grace and superhuman power, Louis Lambert gave me the most poetic and the truest idea of the being whom we call *angel*, — excepting always one woman whose name, person, and life it is my wish to withhold from the world, so that I alone may know the secret of her existence and bury it forever in my heart.

The third phase of Lambert's mental life escaped me. It must have begun after I parted from him; perhaps when he left college in 1815, — being then eighteen years old. He had lost his father and mother during the preceding six months. Finding no one in his family with whom his soul — naturally expansive, but since our separation always repressed — could sympathize, he took refuge with his uncle, now his guardian, who,

deposed from his parish for having taken the oath, now lived in obscurity at Blois. There Louis stayed for some time, until, driven by the desire to pursue his studies, which he felt were incomplete, he went to Paris to seek Madame de Staël, and to drink in science at the fountain-head. The old priest, having a great affection for his nephew, allowed Louis to spend his patrimony on a three years' sojourn in Paris, — though even so the young man lived in the utmost poverty, for his inheritance was small. Lambert returned to Blois at the beginning of the year 1820, driven from Paris by sufferings which all persons without means are compelled to endure there. During his stay, he must often have been a prey to inward storms, to those horrible tempests of thought which shake the artistic soul, if we may judge by the only fact his uncle could remember, and the only letter the good man had preserved of the many Louis wrote him at that period, — a letter which probably owed its preservation to the fact that it was the last and longest of all.

Here, in the first place, is the fact. Louis was sitting one evening on a bench in the second gallery of the Théâtre-Français, near one of the columns between which in those days were the third tier of boxes. Rising during the first intermission, he saw a young lady who had just entered the adjoining box. The sight of this woman, young, beautiful, and well-dressed, possibly with bare neck and arms, accompanied by a lover on whom she smiled with all the grace of happy love, produced so cruel an effect upon the soul and senses of

Louis Lambert that he was obliged to leave the theatre. If he had not used the last gleams of his reason, which, in the first moment of this fiery passion, did not entirely desert him, he might have succumbed to an almost unconquerable desire to kill the young man at whom the woman looked. It was, in the midst of our world of Paris, a flash of the love of a savage darting on woman as on a prey, the effect of a bestial instinct joined to the rapid and ever luminous outburst of a soul hitherto held down under the weight of thought. Was it not, in fact, the imaginary cut of a penknife, once felt by the child, now becoming to the man the thunderbolt of his most imperious need, that of love?

Here follows the letter, in which is portrayed the state of his soul when struck by the spectacle of Parisian civilization. His heart, constantly wounded in that gulf of egoism, must have suffered continually ; probably he found neither friends to console nor enemies to give vigor to his life. Constrained to live incessantly within himself and to share with none his exquisite inward joys, perhaps he may have wished to solve the work of his life through ecstasy, to lead an almost vegetable existence, like an anchorite of the early Church, abdicating thus his empire in the world of intellect. At any rate the letter seems to indicate some such project, to which great souls have been prone at all epochs of social regeneration. But is not such a resolution taken by certain minds the result of natural vocation? Are they not instinctively seeking to concentrate their forces in a long

silence that they may issue from it fit to govern the world by Word or Action? Louis must, assuredly, have reaped bitterness among men, or have attacked society with some terrible irony, and resultlessly, before he uttered so vigorous a cry, before he came, — he, poor and helpless, — to a desire which weariness of power and of all things under heaven has inspired in certain sovereigns. Perhaps, too, he hoped to achieve in solitude the great work which ever floated unfinished in his mind. Who will not readily believe this as they read the following fragment of his thoughts, which betrays the struggles of his soul at the moment when, for him, youth was passing away and the awful faculty of production — to which the works of the matured man would have been due — was about to be born?

This letter bears relation to the incident at the theatre. The Fact and the Written Word throw light upon each other; the soul and the body were tuned to the same key. This tempest of doubt and affirmation, of clouds and vivid flashes through which the thunder bursts, and which ends in ardent aspiration flaming upward to celestial Light, reveals enough of the third phase of his mental training to afford a comprehension of the whole. Reading these pages written at random, continued and discontinued according to the caprices of the moment, may we not fancy that we see an oak at the period when its inward expansion bursts the green sheath of its stem, gnarls it, covers it with fissures, and so prepares for the majestic tree, if the thunder of heaven and the axe of man respect it?

The letter ends, for the thinker as well as for the poet, this august childhood, this uncomprehended youth. The seed has swelled and germinated. Philosophers may regret the foliage, struck with frost ere it burgeoned, but they shall one day see the perfect flower blooming in regions higher far than the highest places of the earth.

PARIS, September–November, 1819.

DEAR UNCLE, — I am about to leave this place, where I cannot exist. I find no man who loves what I love; who concerns himself with what I am concerned with; who wonders at the things I wonder at. Forced back upon myself, I sound my own being, and I suffer. The long and patient study I have given to this Society has brought me to sad conclusions where doubt predominates. Here, in Paris, money is the pivot of all things. Men must have money even to do without money. And yet, though gold is essential to whoever desires to think tranquilly, I have not the courage to make it the prime mover of my thoughts. To amass a fortune one must choose a calling; in a word, purchase by some licensed position or custom, by legal or other privilege cleverly created, the right of taking from another man's purse a trifling sum which, yearly, produces a little capital, which in twenty years will barely give an income of four or five thousand francs, — if a man conducts himself honorably. In fifteen or sixteen years from their apprenticeship, lawyers, notaries, and merchants, — in fact, all licensed workers, — have earned a support for their old age.

I am not fit for anything of the kind. I prefer thought to action, ideas to business, meditation to movement. I am essentially lacking in the close attention necessary to whoever desires to make his fortune. Any mercantile enterprise, any obligation to obtain money from other persons, would lead me into trouble and I should soon be ruined. If I own nothing, at least I owe nothing. The man who lives to accomplish great things in the moral sphere needs but little materially; and yet, though twenty sous a day suffices me to live, I do not possess that stipend for my laborious leisure. If I desire to meditate, want drives my mind from the peaceful sanctuary where thought revolves. What will become of me? I have no dread of poverty. If imprisonment, disgrace, and contempt did not follow mendicancy, I would beg, to be enabled to solve in peace the problems which fill my mind.

But such an abnegation, through which I might emancipate my thought by liberating my body of its cares, would avail me nothing; I should still need money for certain experiences. Were it not for this, I would willingly accept the apparent indigence of the thinker, who possesses earth and heaven alike. To be great in poverty it suffices never to abase ourselves. The man who struggles and who suffers as he advances towards a noble aim is indeed a splendid spectacle; yet who, in these days, has the strength to struggle? We may scale cliffs; but to tramp forever in the mud is another thing. Here, in Paris, all things discourage the direct and upward flight of a mind tending towards futurity.

I should not fear myself in a desert grotto ; I do fear myself here. In the desert I should be mine own, without distraction ; here, man is conscious of many wants which belittle him. When he walks out, dreamy and preoccupied, a pauper's voice recalls him to this world of hunger and of thirst. He needs money even to walk the streets. His organs, incessantly on the strain about mere nothings, know no rest. The nervous fibres of a poet are perpetually shaken, and that which should be his glory is here his torment ; his imagination becomes his cruellest enemy. In Paris, the wounded laborer, or his lying-in wife, the sick prostitute, the abandoned child, the infirm old man, vices, even crimes, find succor and an asylum ; yet society is pitiless to the inventor and to every man who lives in meditation. Here, all things must have an immediate and actual result. Men laugh at the first ineffectual attempts which may lead to vast discoveries ; they set no value on that deep and constant study which needs a prolonged concentration of our powers. The State could pay for talent as it pays for bayonets ; but no, it dreads being cheated by the man of intellect, — as if genius could long be counterfeited !

Ah ! my uncle, when they swept away conventual solitudes, nestling in the valleys, clinging to the hill-sides in green umbrageous silence, they should have built hospitals for suffering souls who, by a single thought, beget the progress of the nations, or discover new and fruitful developments of a science.

September.

Pursuit of knowledge brought me here, as you know. I have found men who are truly learned ; most of them surprisingly so ; but an absence of unity among scientific workers neutralizes nearly all their efforts. Neither instruction nor science has a Head. You will hear a professor at the Museum proving that what another professor teaches you in the rue Saint-Jacques is arrant nonsense. The man at the College of France laughs at him of the School of Medicine. Soon after my arrival, I went to hear an old academician who told five hundred young men that Corneille was a bold and vigorous genius, Racine elegiac and tender, Molière inimitable, Voltaire eminently witty, Bossuet and Pascal unconquerably strong. A professor of philosophy attains celebrity by explaining how Plato is — Plato. Another lectures on the history of words and never mentions ideas. This one elucidates *Æschylus* ; that other proves with eminent success that the Communes were Communes and nothing else. Such novel and luminous disquisitions, amplified for hours, constitute the higher education which purposes to lead human knowledge onward by giant strides. If government could think, I should suspect it of fearing superior intellects, which, when awakened, would put society under the yoke of a mind-power. Nations would then advance too far, too fast ; professors are therefore ordered to bring up fools.

How else can you explain educational bodies without system, without one idea on futurity ? The Institute

might be the great governor of the moral and intellectual world, but it has recently, by its constitution, broken itself up into separate academies. Human knowledge is advancing without a guide, without a system; it floats at the mercy of chance; no appointed way is traced out for it.

The same easy indifference, the same instability, is seen in politics as in science. In the order of nature the means are simple, the end is great and marvellous; with us, in science or in government, the means are vast, the end is petty. That force which in nature moves with equal step, ever adding its total to itself, that $a+a$ which produces all, is destructive in Society. Statecraft pits human forces against one another for the purpose of neutralizing them, instead of forcing them to combine and act to common ends. Taking Europe, and considering it from Cæsar to Constantine, from the little Constantine to the great Attila, from the Huns to Charlemagne, from Charlemagne to Leo X., from Leo X. to Philip II., from Philip II. to Louis XIV., from Venice to England, from England to Napoleon, from Napoleon to England, I see no fixedness in public policy; its constant disturbance has brought it no progress. Nations testify to their grandeur by monuments, and to their happiness by individual welfare. Are modern monuments equal to those of antiquity? I doubt it. The arts which proceed direct from the individual, the productions of genius or of the human hand, have advanced but little. The enjoyments of Lucullus were fully equal to those of Samuel Bernard, de Beaujon, or

the King of Bavaria. Even human longevity has lessened. To those who judge honestly, nothing has really changed; man continues the same; might is the sole law; success the sole virtue. Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Luther, have merely given different hues to the spheres in which the youthful nations made their evolutions. No statecraft has hindered Civilization, with its wealth, its manners and customs, its banding of the strong against the weak, its ideas and its pleasures, from spreading from Memphis to Tyre, from Tyre to Balbek, from Tadmor to Carthage, from Carthage to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Venice, from Venice to Spain, from Spain to England, without one vestige remaining of Memphis, Tyre, Carthage, Rome, Venice, or Madrid. The spirit of those great bodies has fled. Not one saved itself from the wreck; none divined this truth: *when the effect produced is no longer in relation to its cause, disorganization has begun.*

The subtlest genius cannot discover any connection between those great social facts. No political theory has survived. Governments passed away like men, without transmitting instruction; no system gave birth to a more perfect system than the preceding one. What shall we think of human politics when a government leaning upon God perished in India and in Egypt; when the governments of the sabre and the tiara have passed away; when the government of the One dies, and the government of the All has never been able to live; when no conception of intelligent force applied to material

interests has lasted, and all things have to be done anew to-day as throughout the ages during which man has cried aloud, "I suffer!" The Code, which people call Napoleon's greatest work, is the most Draconian set of laws I know. Territorial division pushed to an extreme (and the Code sanctions the principle by its equal distribution of property) must result in the degeneracy of the nation, and the death of the arts and sciences. Divide the soil too closely, and cereals or vegetables will alone be cultivated; the forests, and consequently the water-courses, will disappear; neither cattle nor horses will be raised. Means of attack and defence will alike be wanting. Let an invader come, and the nation is crushed; it has lost its mainspring; it has no head. That is the history of deserts!

Human politics are therefore a science without settled principles, without any possible fixity. They spring from the genius of the moment, and are the constant application of power following the daily necessity as it arises. The man who sees two centuries ahead of him dies on a scaffold, loaded with the imprecations of a people; or (which seems to me worse) is lashed by the whips of ridicule. Nations are individuals who are neither wiser nor stronger than man himself, and their destiny is the same as his. If you reflect upon one you are reflecting on the other. From the spectacle of this society, perpetually shaken and harassed at its foundations as in its results, in its causes as in its action, — a society within which philanthropy is a magnificent error, and progress a meaningless cry, — I gained

confirmation of this truth, — namely, that life is within us and not without us ; that to rise above our fellows for the purpose of commanding them is only to magnify the career of a schoolmaster ; and that men who are strong enough to lift themselves to the level at which they can enjoy the sight of worlds ought not to turn their gaze upon their feet.

November 4th.

I am filled with significant thoughts ; I advance toward certain discoveries ; some invincible force is drawing me to a star which has long glimmered in the twilight of my moral being : but what name must I give to the power which ties my hands, shuts my mouth, and drags me away from my vocation ? I am forced to leave Paris ; I must bid farewell to books, to libraries, to those glorious centres of light, to learned men, so kind and so accessible, to youths of genius with whom I sympathized. What is it drives me hence ? Is it Chance ? is it Providence ? The two ideas represented by those words are irreconcilable. If there is no such thing as Chance then we must admit Fatalism, or the enforced co-ordination of things under a general plan. Why, then, should we resist ? If man is not a free agent, what becomes of the scaffolding of his morality ? But if he can make his own destiny, if he can, by his own free-will, arrest the accomplishment of the general plan, what becomes of God ? Why am I here ? If I examine myself I think I know why, — I find within me themes to be developed ; but if so, why do I possess enormous faculties without being able to use them ? If my torture could serve as

an example, I could understand it, but no, I suffer in obscurity. This condition is perhaps as providential as the fate of a hidden flower withering in the depths of a virgin forest, with none to inhale its fragrance or admire its lustre. Like that flower, shedding perfume in the solitary places, I give birth here, in a garret, to ideas which are never grasped.

Yesterday, I was eating my bread and grapes in the evening, sitting before my window with a young physician, named Meyraux. We were talking as men talk who are made brothers by misfortune, and I said to him: "I go, but you remain; take my conceptions and develop them." "I cannot," he answered, with mournful bitterness; "my health is too feeble to sustain my present labors; I shall die young, struggling with poverty." We looked at the sky and pressed each other's hands. Meyraux and I had met at the Comparative Anatomy lectures and in the galleries of the Museum, both following the same study; namely, the unity of geological composition. In him, it was inspired by the presentiment of genius seeking to open a way through the uncultivated regions of the intellect; I sought, on the other hand, the deduction of a general system. My thought has always been to determine the actual relations which exist between man and God. Is not that a necessity of our epoch? Without high convictions and certainties it is impossible to curb the societies which the spirit of criticism and discussion have set free, and which cry aloud in these days, "Lead us in a path where there are no abysses."

You will ask me what comparative anatomy has to do with a question so important to the future of society. Must we not be convinced that man is the end and object of all terrestrial means and methods before we can ask whether he may not himself be the means to some end? If man is linked to all around him, is there nothing above him to which he links himself? If he be the end-all of the inexplicable transmutations which ascend as far as he, must he not also be the nexus that attaches visible nature to an invisible nature? The action of the universe is not mere folly, — it must attain some end; and that end cannot be a society constituted like ours. A frightful void lies between us and heaven. In our present state we can neither always enjoy nor always suffer; must there not come some mighty change before we can enter heaven or hell, — two conceptions without which God does not exist to the mass of men?

I know this point has been evaded by inventing the soul; but I have a certain repugnance to making God conjointly responsible for human baseness, for our disillusionings, our loathings, our degeneracy. Besides, can we admit that we hold within us a divine essence which a few drams of alcohol may overthrow? Can we imagine immaterial faculties which matter subjugates, and whose exercise is controlled by a grain of opium? Can we conceive that we shall still feel when the conditions of sensation are withdrawn from us? Why should God perish because substance is a thinking quantity! Is the animation of substance and its innumerable vari-

eties, the effects of its instincts, less inexplicable than the effects of thought? Is the motion implanted in the universe not sufficient to prove God, without rushing into the absurdities which man's pride begets? If, out of one form of perishable being we go, after trials, into a better life, is not that enough for creatures who are separated from other creatures by nothing more than a completer instinct? If there is no principle in morality which may not lead to absurdity or be contradicted by evidence, is it not high time to go in quest of doctrines written in the nature of things? Must we not, then, return to philosophical science? We take very little thought of the void, so called, which preceded us, but we peer into that which awaits us. We hold God responsible for the future, but we never ask him to render us account of the past. Yet it is quite as necessary to know whether we have roots in the past as to know if we are welded to the future. We have been deists or atheists in one direction only. Is the world eternal? Was the world created? We conceive no middle term between the two propositions. One is false, the other is true; choose between them! Whichever be your choice, God — the God that our reason presents to us — must depreciate; and that is equivalent to his negation. Say that the world is eternal, and the question is no longer doubtful, — God has undergone it. Suppose the world to have been created; then God is no longer possible. How could he exist throughout eternity and not know that the thought would come to him to create the world? How could he have failed to foreknow its

results? Whence did he derive its essence? From himself necessarily. If the world issued from God, how can we admit evil? If evil issues from good, we plunge into absurdity. If there is no such thing as evil, what are the laws of society? Precipices on all sides, abysses for human reason everywhere! No, social science must be rebuilt from its foundations.

Listen to me, uncle. Till some great genius explains the manifest inequality of intellects, the common understanding of humanity, the word God will ever be impeached, and society will rest on shifting sands. The secret of the different moral zones through which man passes will be found in the analysis of Animality in all its parts. Up to the present time Animality has been considered in relation to its differences only, and not in its similitudes; in its organic appearances, but not in its faculties. The animal faculties are coming nearer and nearer to perfection, according to laws we have still to find. These faculties correspond to the forces which bring them into play, and those forces are essentially material and divisible. Material faculties! Reflect upon those two words. Do they not offer a question as insoluble as that of the communication of movement to matter?—a depth still unexplored, the difficulties of which were displaced rather than removed by Newton.

Again, the constant combination of light with all that lives upon this earth demands a new examination of the globe. The same animal differs from itself in torrid regions, in the Indies, or at the North. Between the zones of the vertical and the oblique sun-rays it

develops a dissimilar yet parallel nature, which, being the same in its essence, does not resemble itself, one way or the other way, in its results. The phenomenon which blinds our eyes in the zoölogical world when we compare the butterflies of Bengal with the butterflies of Europe is more remarkable still in the moral world. A certain facial angle and a given number of brain-folds were required to attain to Columbus, Raphael, Napoleon, Laplace, or Beethoven; the sunless valley produces the crétin. Draw your own conclusions. How do you account for these differences, due to the greater or the lesser distillation of light into man? The vast suffering masses of humanity, more or less active, more or less nourished, more or less illumined, constitute difficulties which must be solved, and which cry aloud against God. Why, in moments of extreme joy, do we long to leave this earth? Why that desire to rise, which seizes and will forever seize upon created man? Motion is a great soul, whose alliance with Matter is fully as difficult to explain as the production of Thought in man. Science is a unit; it is impossible to touch politics without touching morals, and morals are correlated with all scientific questions. It seems to me we are on the eve of a great human battle; the forces are gathering, but — I see no general.

November 25th.

Believe me, dear uncle, it is difficult to renounce without suffering the life that is suited to us. I return to Blois with terrible sinkings of the heart. There I shall die, — carrying away with me useful truths.

No personal interest degrades my regret. What is fame to one who believes he is going to a higher sphere? I have no love for those two syllables of my name, *Lam-bert*; spoken with respect or with indifference above my grave, they cannot change my destiny. I am conscious of strength, of energy; I could become a power. I feel within me a life so luminous that it might quicken worlds; I am held, as it were, in a mineral, like those colors you admire so much on the breast of tropic birds. Ah! we must needs embrace the whole world and clasp it to our bosoms before we can remake it; but those who have thus clasped and thus refashioned it, did they not begin as a wheel of the machine? As for me, those wheels would crush me. No, to Mohammed the sabre, to Christ the cross, to me death in obscurity; to-morrow at Blois, ere long in my coffin.

Know you why? I have returned to Swedenborg after vast studies of all religions; after convincing myself, by reading all books which patient Germany, England, and France have published during the last sixty years, of the profound truth of my youthful perceptions of the Bible. Beyond a doubt, Swedenborg gathers to him all religions, or rather the one religion of Humanity. Though worship has taken an infinitude of forms, neither its meaning nor its metaphysical construction have ever varied. Man has never had but one religion. Sivaism, Vishnuism, and Brahmanism, the first three religions, born in Thibet, in the valley of the Indus, and along the vast plains of the Ganges, ended their warfare several thousand years before

Christ by adopting the Hindu *Trimourti*. The *Trimourti* is our Trinity. From this dogma sprang, in Persia, Magianism; in Egypt, the African religions and Mosaism; after them the Greco-Roman Polytheism. While these rays of the *Trimourti* adapted the myths of Asia to the imagination of every land to which they reached, guided by sages whom men transmuted into demi-gods, — Mithra, Dionysus, Hermes, Heracles, — Buddha, the celebrated reformer of the three primitive religions, arose in India and founded his Faith (numbering at the present day two hundred million more worshippers than Christianity), a fount in which the all-powerful wills of Christ and of Confucius came to steep themselves. There Christianity raised its banner. Later, Mohammed blended Mosaism, Christianity, the Bible, and the Gospel into one book, the Koran, adapting them to the genius of the Arabs. Finally, Swedenborg gathered from Magianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christian Mysticism that which those four great religions have in common, — namely, the real, the divine within them, — and gave to this united doctrine a synthesis which may well be called mathematical.

He who casts himself upon those streams of faith (the founders of which are not all known) will find that Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Christ, and Swedenborg held the first divine principles and looked to the same end. But the last of them, Swedenborg, may prove the Buddha of the North. Though his books are diffuse and obscure, they hold the elements

of a vast social conception. His theocracy is sublime ; and his religion is the only one a superior mind can accept. He alone enables man to touch God ; he creates a thirst for Him ; he rescues the majesty of God from the swaddling-clothes in which other human faiths have muffled it ; he has left Him where He is, making his innumerable creatures and creations gravitate around Him by successive transformations which lead to a nearer and more natural future than the Catholic Eternity. He has cleansed God of the reproach which tender souls have cast upon Him for the lasting vengeance with which He visits a passing sin, — a theory of a God without justice and without mercy.

Each man may learn for himself whether it is reserved for him to enter another life, and whether this world has any meaning. I am about to test this experience. My attempt may help to save the world, like the cross of Jerusalem and the sabre of Mecca, — both were the product of solitude and the desert. Of the thirty-three years of Jesus' life only nine are known ; his silent years prepared his glorious struggle. I, too, I need the desert.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the undertaking, I have felt it my duty to endeavor to portray Louis Lambert's youth, — that hidden life to which I owe the only happy hours, the only pleasant memories, of my childhood. Except during those two college years, my life was full of trouble and annoyance ; if happiness came later, it was ever incomplete. I have been, no

doubt, very diffuse ; but unless we penetrate the depth and the extent of Lambert's heart and brain, — two words which imperfectly represent the infinite outlooks of his *inward being*, — it would be almost impossible to understand the second part of his intellectual history, unknown in its course both to the world and to me, but the occult ending of which was made manifest to me during a period of several hours. Those who have not already thrown aside this book will comprehend, I hope, the events I have still to relate, which form, as it were, the second existence of this creature destined to be exceptional in all things, even in his end.

When Louis returned to Blois his uncle endeavored to procure him some amusement. But the poor curate was treated in that pious town like a pariah, a leper. No one in good society would receive a revolutionist, a sworn-in priest. His social circle was therefore limited to a few persons whose opinions were then called liberal, patriotic, or constitutional ; among whom he spent his evenings playing whist or boston. In the first house to which he took his nephew, Louis met a young lady whose peculiar position relegated her to this society thus condemned by the great world, although her fortune was large enough to have enabled her to marry into the ranks of the aristocracy. Mademoiselle Pauline de Villenoix was the sole heiress of the wealth amassed by her grandfather, a Jew named Salomon, who, contrary to the customs of his nation, had married in his old age a woman of the Catholic faith. He had a son who was brought up in the religion of the mother. At the death

of his father young Salomon bought, to use a saying of that day, a *savonnette à vilain*, — in other words, lands for a title, — and made the estate of Villenoix into a barony, taking the name for his family. He died unmarried, leaving a natural daughter to whom he bequeathed the greater part of his fortune and more especially the estate of Villenoix. One of his uncles, Monsieur Joseph Salomon, was appointed by Monsieur de Villenoix guardian of the orphan child. This old Jew had so strong an affection for his ward that he seemed ready to make any sacrifices to marry her well. But Mademoiselle de Villenoix's origin and the prejudice against Jews still existing in the provinces, prevented her, in spite of her wealth and that of her guardian, from being admitted to that exclusive social circle which calls itself, with or without reason, the nobility. However, Monsieur Joseph Salomon made known that instead of taking some country squire his ward should go to Paris, and select a husband among the liberal or monarchical peers; as to her personal happiness, the worthy guardian was persuaded he could secure that by the terms of the marriage contract.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix was just twenty years old. Her remarkable beauty and the graces of her mind were less doubtful security for her happiness than that bestowed on her by wealth. Her features bore the impress of Jewish beauty in its utmost purity, — the oval lines, so broad and so virginal, unspeakably ideal and suggestive of the delights of the Orient, the unalterable azure of its skies, the splendors of its earth, the

fabulous riches of its existence. She had fine eyes, veiled by long lids fringed with thick and curving lashes. A Scriptural innocence shone from her brow. Her skin had the smooth and even whiteness of a Levite's robes. She was habitually silent and collected; but her gestures, her motions betrayed an inward grace, just as her words gave evidence of the gentle and caressing nature of the woman. Still, she had not the dewy freshness, the rosy tints which adorn the cheek of girlhood in its careless prime. Brown shadows, mingled with a few russet threads, took the place of color in her face and betrayed an energy of character and a nervous excitability which many men dislike to find in a woman, but which to certain others is an indication of lofty passions and the chastity of a sensitive soul.

No sooner had Lambert caught sight of Mademoiselle de Villenoix than he divined the angel within her form. The rich faculties of his mind, his leaning towards ecstasy, in short, all within him merged into boundless love, the first love of a young man, a passion (in others of his age already so vigorous) which the vernal ardor of his senses, the nature of his ideas and his modes of life now lifted into incalculable power. This passion was a fathomless depth into which the hapless man flung all; a depth to which our thoughts dare not follow him, since his thought, strong and flexible as it was, perished there. All is mystery; for all occurred within the boundaries of that moral world shut from the knowledge of most men, whose laws may have been revealed to Lambert for his destruction.

When accident brought me, as I have said, into relations with his uncle, that worthy man took me into the room which Louis occupied at the period of which I now write. I looked for traces of his work, if any such had been left there. Among the papers, the careless disorder of which his uncle had respected with that exquisite sensibility to suffering characteristic of old people, I found many letters to Mademoiselle de Villenoix, evidently too illegible to have been sent to her. My intimate acquaintance with Lambert's writing enabled me, in time, to decipher the hieroglyphics of a stenography invented by the impatience and the frenzy of his passion. Carried away by his feelings, he wrote without perceiving the imperfection of a writing too slow to express his thought. He had evidently been obliged to recopy his first attempts, the lines of which in many instances mingled confusedly; perhaps, also, he may have feared that his feelings were scarcely enough disguised, and therefore, at the outset of his love, he wrote each letter over again. However this may be, it needed all the ardor of my worship for his memory, and the sort of fanaticism derived from an effort of this kind, to divine and restore the meaning of the five following letters. These papers, which I religiously preserve, are the sole material evidence of his ardent passion. Mademoiselle de Villenoix has doubtless destroyed the letters themselves (those that were sent to her), eloquent records of the delirium which she caused.

The first of these letters, evidently what is termed

a rough copy, shows in its style and amplifications the doubts, the troubles of mind, the innumerable fears awakened by the desire to please, the changes of expression, and the fluctuations of thought, which assail a young man when he writes of his love for the first time, — a letter never forgotten, each phrase of which is the fruit of a revery, while every word excites contemplation; a letter in which the most ungovernable of all feelings comprehends the necessity of reserved expression, and like a giant who stoops to enter a cottage door, makes itself small and humble that it may not shock or frighten the soul of a young girl. Never antiquary handled his palimpsests with more reverence than I felt when studying and reconstructing these mutilated monuments of a suffering and a joy so sacred to those who have known the same suffering and the same joy.

I.

Mademoiselle, when you shall have read this letter, if indeed you deign to read it, my life will be in your hands, for I love you; and for me the hope of being loved is life itself. I know not if other men, speaking to you of themselves, have misused the words I here employ to picture to you the state of my soul; believe, nevertheless, in the truth of my expressions, — they are feeble, but sincere.

Perhaps it is a mistake thus to avow my love. Yes, my heart counsels me to wait in silence till my passion may have touched you; so that I may crush it if its mute evidence displease you, or express it more chastely

than by words if I find favor in your eyes. I have listened long to the scruples which daunt a young man's heart, and now, in writing to you, I obey the instinct that wrings useless cries from the dying. I summon all my courage to silence the pride of poverty and leap the barriers which prejudice has placed between you and me. Many are the thoughts I must needs repress to love you in spite of your wealth. In this mere act of writing to you, I must risk the contempt that women often feel for a love whose confession is to them but one flattery the more. Yes, it is best to spring with all our strength toward happiness; to be drawn to the life of love as a plant to the light; best to have known unhappiness to know also how to conquer the torture of these inward deliberations, in which reason proves to us in a thousand ways the inefficacy of wishes hidden in the depths of the heart, while hope persuades us to dare all.

I was happy when admiring you in silence; so completely was I sunken in contemplation of your glorious soul that I imagined no other happiness than to look at you. I should not dare to speak to you even now were it not for the news of your possible departure. To what agony a single word has condemned me! But my grief has taught me to measure the extent of my attachment,—it is boundless. Mademoiselle, you will never know, at least I pray that you may never know, the suffering caused by the fear of losing the only happiness that has ever dawned for me on earth; the sole joy that has cast a gleam into the darkness of my

misery. Yesterday I felt that my life was no longer in me, but in you. For me there is henceforth but one woman in the world, just as there is but one thought in my soul. I dare not tell you to what alternative my love for you reduces me. Unwilling to win you except through the impulsion of your own wishes, I must avoid appealing to you by signs of grief, — more moving far to noble hearts than those of fortune. I am forced, therefore, to withhold from you many things. Yes, I have too lofty an idea of love to degrade it by thoughts which are foreign to its nature. If my soul is worthy of yours, if my life is pure, your heart will have generous intuitions of it, — you will comprehend me. It is in the destiny of man to offer himself to her who makes his dream of happiness; but it is also your woman's right to refuse the truest of all feelings if they do not harmonize with the confused voices of your heart; this I know.

If the fate to which you consign me, Mademoiselle, is contrary to my hopes, I invoke the delicacy of your virgin soul, the ingenuous pity of your womanhood, and I entreat you, burn my letter, forget all. Do not lightly smile at a feeling profoundly respectful and too deeply graven in my soul ever to be effaced. Break my heart, but do not rend it! Should the utterance of my only love, a young, pure love, find no echo in a pure young heart, should it die there as a prayer is lost in the bosom of the Divine, still, I owe you gratitude; I have spent delightful hours watching you as I yielded to the sweetest reveries of all my life; do not end this long yet

fleeting gladness with the laughing jest of a young girl. Do not answer me at all. I shall understand your silence, and you will see me no more. If it be my fate to comprehend felicity and ever lose it; if, like the banished angel, I bear within me knowledge of celestial joys and yet am linked indissolubly to a world of pain, I will keep the secret of my love as of my misery.

Adieu! Yes, I confide you to God; I implore him on your behalf; I ask him to give you a happy life, if so be that I am driven from your heart, where I have entered furtively without your knowledge, — but even then, I shall never leave you. If it were otherwise, what value would there be, what truth, in the words, the sacred words of this letter, my first and perhaps my last prayer? If I ceased hereafter to think of you, to love you, whether I were happy or unhappy, should I not deserve my anguish?

II.

You stay! you do not leave me! Then I am loved! I, poor and obscure! My dear Pauline, you do not know the power of that glance in which I trust, and which you gave me to reveal that I am chosen by you, by you! young and beautiful, with the world at your feet.

To make you understand my happiness I must needs relate to you my life. If you had rejected my prayer all was over with me. I had suffered too much. Yes, my love, this beneficent, this glorious love, was the last effort toward happiness of a soul that is bruised

and broken by useless labors, wasted by fears which make me doubt myself, gnawed by despair which tells me often to find rest in death. No one living can know the terror my fatal imagination causes me. It lifts me often to the skies, then suddenly replunges me to earth from awful heights. Inward impulses of vigor, certain rare and secret proofs of mental clearness, assure me at times that I am capable of much. At such times I grasp the universe of thought, I knead it, I mould it, I pierce it, I comprehend, or think I comprehend, it. Then suddenly I wake, I am in darkness, puny and pitiable; I forget the gleams that I have seen; no succor comes to me; above all, no heart in which I might take refuge.

This evil of my moral life reacts upon my physical existence. The nature of my mind leaves me as defenceless before the joys of happiness as against the dreadful lights of reflection which destroy those joys by analyzing them. Gifted with the dismal faculty of seeing both obstacles and attainment with equal clearness, I am happy or unhappy according to the conviction of the moment. Thus when I first met you the perception of an angel filled my soul; I breathed an air that healed my fevered breast; I heard within me the voice that never deceives, offering me a happy life; but, perceiving at the same moment the barriers that separate us, I understood the prejudices of the world for the first time, I saw them in all their pettiness, and the sense of these obstacles depressed me more than the glimpse of happiness had uplifted me. At

once, the terrible reaction by which my expanding soul returns upon itself set in; the smile you had brought to my lips changed suddenly to bitter contraction; I tried to remain calm while my blood, driven hither and thither by conflicting feelings, boiled in my veins. I felt once more that cutting sensation to which twenty-three years of repressed sighs and betrayed aspiration have accustomed me.

Pauline! the glance with which you told me of my happiness rekindled my life and changed my wretchedness to felicity. I now wish that I had suffered more. My love rose to greatness. My soul was a vast tract, barren for want of sun; your glance has cast the sun's rays on it. Dear Providence! you will be all to me, — to me, poor orphan with no kindred but an uncle. You will be my family, as you now are my wealth, nay, the whole world to me! Did you not bestow upon me all the treasures of a man, in that chaste, that prodigal, that timid glance? You have given me courage, yes, unspeakable boldness. I dare all now. I returned to Blois cast down. Five years in Paris taught me to regard the world as a prison. There I conceived whole sciences and dared not speak of them. Fame seemed to me an imposture, from which a truly noble soul should keep itself aloof. My ideas could gain a hearing only from the lips of one bold enough to mount the platform of the Press and speak with a loud voice to fools whom he despised. I had not that boldness. I went my way; crushed by the judgments of the crowd, despairing of being heard, — I was too low, and yet too high! I swal

lowed my thoughts as others swallow their humiliations. I even came to despise science, blaming it for adding nothing to human happiness.

But, since yesterday, all is changed within me. For your sake I crave the laurels of fame and the triumphs of genius. I desire as I lay my head upon your knees to draw thither the eyes of men, just as I desire to put my love into all ideas, into all my powers. Fame is a possession which no potentate but genius can create. Well! I can, if I will, make you a couch of laurels. But should the peaceful ovations of science not suffice you, I bear within me the Sword and the Word; I can speed my way along the path of honors and ambitions where others slowly drag themselves. Speak, Pauline; I will be all you wish me to be. My iron will is capable of all. I am loved! Armed with that thought a man can make all things bend before him. All is possible to him who wills all. Be the guerdon of success, and tomorrow I enter the lists. To obtain another look like that you gave me I would plunge into unfathomable gulfs. You explain to me the emprises of Chivalry, the fabulous tales of the Arabian Nights; I now believe in all fanciful exaggerations of love, and the success of prisoners in their bold attempts to conquer liberty. You have wakened a thousand virtues slumbering within my being,—patience, resignation, all the powers of the heart, all the forces of the soul. I live through you, and, oh blissful thought! for you. Now all things have a meaning to me in life; I understand all—even the vanity of riches. I behold myself pouring the pearls of India

at your feet ; I fancy I see you lying amid the brightest flowers, on the softest tissues, and the splendors of earth seem to me scarce worthy of you — of you, for whom I would fain draw down all harmonies, all light, which the harps of Seraphim and the stars of heaven lavish ! —

Poor student poet ! my words offer you treasures which I have not. I have nought to give you but my heart, where you will reign eternally. In that is my wealth. But are there no treasures in gratitude ? in smiles whose expression is ever varied by happiness immutable ? in the ceaseless study of my love to divine the wishes of your loving soul ? A celestial glance has told us that we shall forever understand each other. I have now a prayer to offer each night to God, a prayer that is all for you : “ Make my Pauline happy ! ” Ah ! will you not one day fill my life as now you fill my heart !

Adieu — I can commit you to none but God.

III.

Pauline ! tell me if it is possible that I displeased you yesterday ? Lay aside the pride of heart which leads us to bear secretly the suffering caused by one we love. Blame me. A vague fear that I offended you sheds gloom upon that life of the heart which you have made so sweet and affluent. Often the lightest veil that falls between two spirits becomes a wall of adamant. There are no slight crimes in love ! If the genius of that glorious sentiment is in you, you must feel all its sufferings,

and I ought to watch unceasingly lest I wound you by some heedless word. Dear treasure! no doubt the fault was mine — if fault there were. I make no boast of understanding woman's heart in all the plenitude of her tenderness and the graces of her devotion, but I will ever try to value justly whatever you are pleased to reveal to me of yours. Speak, tell me; answer quickly. The sadness produced by the sense of a wrong done is terrible; it wraps about us and makes us doubt of everything. To-day I sat an hour on the lower road watching the towers of Villenoix, not daring to go to our trysting-place.

Ah, if you only knew what I then saw within my soul! — what gloomy phantoms passed before me, as I sat beneath that leaden sky whose chilling aspect made me gloomier still! Dark presentiments assailed me. I feared I could not make you happy — My Pauline, I must tell you all. Moments come when the spirit that quickens me withdraws itself. I am, as it were, abandoned by my forces. All things become a burden; each fibre of my body is inert, each sense relaxes, my vision dulls, my tongue stiffens, imagination fades, desires die, and nought remains but creative force. At such times hereafter you will be present in all the glory of your beauty; your winning smiles, your tenderest words will be lavished upon me! What if some evil power arise to blind me, and turn to jangling discords this most ravishing of melodies? At such moments there rises before me (at least I think so) a reasoning spirit, who bids me see the nothingness that lies below our surest treasures.

Pitiless demon! who mows the flowers, sneers at the sweetest feelings, and asks me, "Well, what follows?" He blights the beautiful work by showing me its principle; he reveals the mechanism and blinds me to its harmonious results. In those awful moments, when the evil angel grasps my being, when the light divine is darkened in my soul (though I know not why or wherefore), I am sad, I suffer, I long to be deaf and dumb, I wish for death in hopes of rest.

Perhaps these hours of doubt and anxiety are necessary; at least, they teach me to take no pride in the stimulus that bears me to the heavens, where with eager hands I garner in the harvest of ideas; for it is always after I have wandered long through the vast regions of the mind, after luminous meditation, that I fall, weary and spent, into this purgatory. At such moments, dear angel, a woman would doubt my love, — at least, she well might do so. Sometimes capricious, often ailing or sad herself, she would need the caressing treasures of a man's tenderness, and I should have none to give her. Pauline, it shames me to tell you that I might weep with you at such times; but support you with a smile, — never! Yet a woman would find strength in love to hide her pains. For her child, as for him she loves, she smiles and suffers. Can it be, my Pauline, that even for your sake I am unable to imitate a woman in her supremest delicacy?

I doubt myself since yesterday. I have hurt you; I have failed to comprehend you. I tremble lest I be dragged again and yet again, by my fatal demon, be-

yond the boundaries of our good sphere. Were I to have many such fearful moments, were my boundless love unable to redeem the evil hours of my life, were I destined to continue such as I am now — ah, torturing thoughts! power is a fatal gift, if that which I feel within me is power indeed. Pauline, leave me, go from me, abandon me! I would rather suffer all the woes of life than bear the agony of knowing that you suffer through me.

But perhaps the demon gains empire over my soul because, as yet, no white and gentle hands have been beside me to repulse him. Never has woman shed her balm of consolation upon my wounds, and I know not whether in such moments of lassitude love may not spread her wings above my head, and pour into my heart some superhuman force. Perhaps this cruel melancholy is the fruit of my solitude, the sufferings of an abandoned soul which moans and pays for joy with untold sufferings. To easy pleasures, easy pains; to infinite joys, unheard-of anguish. What a sentence on mankind! If it be so, ought we not to tremble, my Pauline, we who are now superhumanly happy? If Nature sells all things according to their value, into what depths are we about to fall? Ah, the happy-fated lovers are those who die together in their love and youth. What gloomy thoughts! Does my soul foresee an evil future? I examine myself, I ask myself if there be anything in me that must bring you grief. Perhaps I love you selfishly. Perhaps I lay on that dear head a burden greater than the sweetness my love can shed

within your heart. If there be in me some inexorable power which I must needs obey, if I must curse while you must pray, if some sad thought controls me when I fain would lie at your feet, and play with you as with an infant, will you never be jealous of this capricious and exacting spirit?

Do you comprehend, heart of mine, that I fear lest I be not wholly yours? Know, Pauline, that I would gladly abdicate all sceptres, all earthly crowns, to make you my eternal thought; to find in our delightful love a noble life, a glorious poem where I might fling my soul, engulf my powers, and ask of every hour the joys it owes us. Ah! the memories of love return to me; the clouds of sadness are rolling from my brain. Adieu, I leave you to be nearer to you. My cherished soul, give me a word, — I await a word, a single word, to shed peace into my heart. Let me know if I have grieved you; or whether some chance expression of your face misled me. May I never, at the close of our happy life, reproach myself for greeting you without a smile of love, without the honey of a tender word. To grieve the woman we love! that, my Pauline, is a crime in my eyes. Tell me the truth; send me no generous falsehood, but disarm your pardon of all cruelty.

FRAGMENT.

Is so complete an attachment happiness? Yes, because years of suffering cannot outweigh one hour of love. Yesterday your apparent sadness passed athwart my life with the rapidity of a falling shadow. Were

you sad? Did you suffer? I suffered. Whence came that pain? tell me quickly. Why did I not divine it? We are not yet absolutely one in thought; if we were, I should be conscious of your pains and griefs at five miles or a thousand from you. I shall not think I love you until my life becomes so intimately bound to yours that between us there will be but one life, one heart, one mind. I must be where you are, see what you see, feel what you feel, and follow you in thought. Did I not know, instantly, when your carriage was overturned and you were hurt? That day I never left you; *I saw you*. When my uncle asked me why I turned pale I answered, "Mademoiselle de Villenoix has just been hurt." Why, then, did I not read your soul yesterday? Were you trying to hide the cause of your grief? I fancied you had made some ineffectual efforts on my behalf with your uncle Salomon, who chills and stiffens me. That man does not belong to our heaven. Why do you wish that our happiness, which resembles no other upon earth, should conform to the laws of earth? But I love your virgin purity, your creed, your superstitions too well not to obey your least desire. What you wish must be right; nothing is so pure as your thought, just as nothing is so beautiful as your face, which reflects the Divine within you.

I will await your letter before I take my way to the sweet meeting which you grant me. Did you but know how the sight of those towers makes me palpitate when I see them touched by the moon,—our friend, our confidant!

IV.

Farewell Fame! farewell, my future! farewell, O life of which I dreamed! Now, dear loved one, it is my glory to be thine, worthy of thee. My future is the hope of seeing thee; and my life, what is it? to lie at thy feet, to win thy glance, to breathe with open lungs the air of heaven which thou hast brought me. All my forces, all my thoughts must needs be thine, — hast thou not said to me the entrancing words, “Thy griefs are mine!”

Do I not rob love of joy, happiness of precious moments, thy saintly soul of feelings, when I give hours to study, ideas to earth, poetry to poets? Dear life of mine, I desire to give thee all; to lay at thy feet each flower of my soul. What is there beautiful enough, splendid enough, in the treasures of earth or mind, to do honor to a heart so rich, so pure? — a heart with which I dare ally my own sometimes. Yes, *sometimes* I proudly feel that I can love even as thou lovest. But no, thou art an angel-woman; there will ever be greater charm in the utterance of thy feelings, more harmony in thy voice, more grace in thy smiles, more purity in thy glance than in mine. Yes, let me think thee a creation of a higher sphere than that I live in. Take thou the pride of descending from it; I shall have that of meriting thy descent. It may be no forfeiture of thy heaven to come to me, a poor, unhappy man. If the truest home of a woman is a heart all hers, thou shalt ever be the sovereign of mine. No thought, no

act can stain that heart, rich sanctuary, so long as thou deignest to inhabit it, — but that will be forever, will it not? Hast thou not said to me, “Now and ever!” “*ET NUNC ET SEMPER?*” I have carved those words of the ritual beneath thy portrait, words worthy of thee as they are of God. He is *now* and *ever*, like my love.

No, no, never can I exhaust that which is limitless, infinite. So powerful is the sentiment I feel for thee that I am able to divine its immeasurable extent as we divine space by measuring a fraction of it. Thus I have found ineffable enjoyment, hours filled with meditations of delight, in recalling a single gesture, a tone, an accent of thy voice. Hereafter, memories will arise beneath whose weight I must succumb, since even now the recollection of some sweet familiar moment makes me weep with joy, softens and penetrates my heart, and is to me a quenchless stream of happiness. To love is the life of angels! Methinks I never can exhaust the pleasure I obtain in seeing thee. That pleasure, the humblest of all, for which Time is insufficient, has taught me to know the contemplations of the Seraphim and of the souls made perfect before God. Nothing is more comprehensible, if from His essence emanates a light as fruitful of new emotions as that from thine eyes, thy stately brow, thy noble face, celestial image of thy soul, — the soul, that other self of ourselves, whose pure, undying shape renders our love immortal.

I would there existed a language other than that I use to express the ever-springing delights of my love! If there be one that we ourselves have created, if our

looks are living words, must we not stay in each other's sight to hear by the eyes those questions and answers of the heart that are so ardent, so penetrating, that once my Pauline said to me, "Hush, be silent!" when I was saying nothing, — dost thou remember, sweetest life? From afar, when lost in the dusk of absence, I am forced to use human words too feeble to render these divine sensations; and yet such words mark the furrows those feelings trace upon my heart, just as the word God imperfectly sums up the ideas we form of that mysterious essence. Again, though language may have a science and an infinity of its own, I have never yet found anything within it which could paint to thy soul the blissful clasp by which my life mingles with thine when I think of thee. And still again, what word shall I choose to end these words when I cease to write and yet do not leave thee? What means adieu — unless we die? But is death ever an adieu? Will not my soul be united then to thine, far closer than before?

Oh, my eternal thought! lately I offered thee, upon my knees, my life, my heart; and now, what flowers of feeling can I find within my soul that I have not already given thee? It is as though I were to send thee fragments of a possession already thine. Art thou not my future? I regret the past, those years that belong to us no more; would I could make thee sovereign over them, as now thou art over my present life! What was the period of my existence when I knew thee not? a void, — except for wretchedness.

FRAGMENT.

Angel of love, how sweet a meeting was that of yesterday! What wealth in thy dear heart! Thy love is inexhaustible, like mine. Each word brought me fresh joys, each look deepened them. The calm expression of thy face gave a limitless horizon to our thoughts. Yes, all was infinite like the skies, and soft as their azure. The delicacy of those adored features was reproduced, I know not how, in thy graceful movements, thy pretty gestures. I knew thou wert all grace, all love; but I did not know the variations of thy charm. All things combined last night to counsel those delicious solicitations, those prayers for the first favors which a woman ever denies, doubtless to let us capture them. But no, thou dear soul of my life, *thou* couldst never know beforehand what thou mightest grant to love; perhaps thou mayest give thyself at last without willing it. Thou art true; thy own heart alone controls thee.

How the sweetness of thy voice blended with the harmonies of that pure sky, those tranquil heavens! Not a bird-note, not a breeze — ourselves and solitude! Even the foliage did not stir in those rich colors of the couchant sun which are both light and shadow. The celestial poem moved thee — thee in whom so many feelings gather; often thine eyes were raised to heaven lest they should answer mine! Ah, Pauline, stately and smiling, humble and despotic, giving thyself without reserve in soul, in thought, yet withdrawing from each

timid caress! Dear coyness of the heart! how it vibrates in my ear, murmuring still those precious words, half-stammered as in childhood, — words that were neither promises nor avowals, and yet they left to love its dearest hopes without fears and without torture! Chaste memory through life! Blossoming of all the flowers born in the depths of the soul, which a breath may wither, but which in those dear moments lived and fructified! It will be ever thus, my loved one, will it not? Recalling, this morning, the fresh and living sweetness that played about us at that moment, I feel a happiness within my soul which teaches me to conceive Love as an ocean of eternal and ever-new sensations, where we may plunge forever with increasing joys. Each day, each word, each dear caress, each glance, must add the flowing tribute of its bliss. Yes, hearts so great that they remember all must feel at each pulsation their past delights as well as those the future offers them. This is what I dreamed of in old days; to-day it is no more a dream. An angel has come to me on earth and made me know all joys, — perhaps to compensate me for having known all sorrows. Angel of heaven, I salute thee with a kiss.

I send thee this hymn as it springs from my heart. I owe it to Thee, who art the spirit of my life; but it tells Thee little of my gratitude or of the matin prayers which my heart daily offers to her who taught me the heart's gospel in one blessed word, "BELIEVE."

V.

Dear cherished heart ! what, no more hindrances ? Free to belong to each other each day, each hour, forever ! Happy all the days of our life as we now are furtively at rare moments ! Can it be that our pure, deep sentiments will take the form of those exquisite caresses of which I dreamed ? Thy little foot will bare itself to me ; thou wilt be all mine ! Such joy kills me, annihilates me ! My head is too weak ; it bursts under the violence of my thoughts. I weep, I laugh, I rave. Each pleasure is like a flaming arrow ; it pierces me, it burns me. My imagination brings thee before my ravished, dazzled eyes in all the innumerable capricious shapes of blissful enjoyment. Our life lies there, before me, with its flowing tides, its pauses, rests, and joys ; it foams, it broadens into peace, it sleeps ; then it awakes, young and vernal. I see us united, stepping with one step, living in one thought, ever at the core of each other's heart, comprehending ourselves, hearing ourselves, as an echo receives and returns sound across the intervalles. Can we live long if life is thus intense at every moment ? Shall we not die in a first embrace ? What if our souls already mingled in that soft kiss of evening, in which our strength abandoned us, — that fleeting kiss, first fruit of my desires, impotent interpreter of prayers ascending in my soul when absent from thee, yet hidden with compunction in my heart ?

Ah ! can it be that I, who lay so often beneath the hedge to hear the sound of thy feet as they went toward

the château, that I am to love thee at my ease, to see thee coming, going, laughing, playing, talking, doing! One must be a man to know the depth and meaning of such feelings! Each of thy movements gives me more pleasure than a mother feels in watching her babe at play or sleeping. I love thee with all loves. The grace of thy slightest gesture is ever new to me. I dream that I could pass whole nights in breathing thy breath. Would that I might enter every action of thy life, be the substance itself of thy thoughts, — nay, more, I would be thyself! Never again am I to leave thee! No human pride or sentiment can henceforth trouble our love, — our love vast as the sea, vast as the sky, infinite in its transformations, and pure as all else that is One. Thou art mine! all mine! I may gaze into the depths of those eyes to find the dear soul that hides there and divine its wishes. My loved one, listen to something I have not dared to say to thee, but which I dare avow to-day. I have felt within me a nameless modesty of soul which would not let me give expression to all my feelings; I tried to clothe them with the forms of thought. But now I long to bare my heart, to tell thee all the ardor of my dreams, to unveil the throbbing ambition of my senses, irritated by the solitude in which I have lived, stimulated by long waiting for happiness, and awakened by thee — by thee, so soft in form, so winning in manner!

But it is not possible to explain this thirst for those mysterious joys which the possession of the woman we love bestows upon us, and to which two souls closely

bound in love must bring a force of union unparalleled. My Pauline, I have stood entranced for hours in a stupor caused by the violence of my passionate desires ; lost in the consciousness of a caress, as in a depth unfathomable. I dare tell thee now that on the day when I refused to take thy hand, held out to me with such sweet grace (a melancholy virtue which made thee doubt my love !), I was seized by the momentary madness which makes a man imagine murder to possess a woman. Yes, had I felt the pressure of that hand as keenly as thy voice echoed within my heart I know not where the violence of my feelings might have led me. But I can suffer much and be silent.

Ah, why speak of such pains when my visions are to become realities? Permission is mine to make our life a long caress! My cherished loved one, a light rests on thine ebon hair with such effects that I could stand absorbed for hours in contemplating thy dear person if thou didst not say to me, turning quickly, "Cease, cease, you shame me!" To-morrow our love will know itself! Ah, Pauline, the eyes, the looks of others, that public curiosity — I cannot bear them! Let us go to Villenoix ; let us stay there, far from every one. I desire that no creature of human kind should enter the sanctuary where thou art mine ; I would that after us no life existed, that all things were destroyed. Yes, I would tear from nature herself a happiness we alone can comprehend, we alone can feel, — a happiness so vast, so illimitable, that I fling myself into it to die ; it is an abyss.

Do not be terrified by the tears which moisten this letter; they are tears of joy. Sole joy of mine! We are about to meet to part no more.

In 1823 I was travelling from Paris to Touraine in the diligence. When we reached Mer the conductor took a passenger for Blois. As he opened the door of the division of the coach in which I was he said to this person, laughing, "You will not be squeezed, Monsieur Lefebre." I was, in fact, alone. Hearing the name, and seeing an old gentleman with white hair who appeared to be an octogenarian, I naturally thought of Lambert's uncle. After a few indirect questions, I found I was not mistaken. The old priest had sold his vintages at Mer and was returning to Blois. I at once asked for news of my school friend. At the first mention of Lambert's name, the face of the old Oratorian, already grave and severe as that of a soldier who has suffered, grew darker and sadder; the lines of his forehead contracted, he pressed his lips together, gave me a doubtful look, and said: —

"You have not seen him since your schooldays?"

"No," I answered. "But we are equally guilty of neglect, if neglect it be. You know the eager and adventurous life that young men lead after they leave college; they must meet again before they know if their attachment continues. However, a youthful sentiment sometimes survives, and then it is impossible to forget altogether, especially in the case of such friends as Lambert and I. In college they used to call us the 'Poet-and-Pythagoras.'"

I told him my name ; but when he heard it his face grew darker still.

“Then you do not know his history?” he said. “My poor nephew was to have married the richest heiress in Blois, but he went mad the evening before his marriage.”

“Lambert mad !” I exclaimed, bewildered. “From what cause? His was the richest memory, the best organized mind, the most sagacious judgment I have ever met. Glorious genius ! too much inclined, perhaps, to mysticism, but the noblest heart in the world ! Some most extraordinary thing must have happened to him.”

“I see that you knew him well,” said the old man.

From Mer to Blois we talked of my poor comrade with many digressions, through which I learned the particulars of his story which I have already related, in order to give sequence to these facts and render them interesting. I told his uncle of our secret studies and the nature of his nephew’s cherished occupations ; in return he related to me the chief events of Lambert’s life after our separation. According to Monsieur Le-febre’s account Lambert must have shown signs of madness before his marriage. But as these symptoms were like those of other men passionately in love, I thought them less characteristic of insanity after I knew Mademoiselle de Villenoix and the ardor of his feeling for her. In the provinces, where ideas have a tendency to rarefy, a man full of novel thoughts and possessed by theories, like Louis, would naturally be considered an original. His very language was sur-

prising, — all the more because he seldom talked. He would say of this or that man, “He does not belong to my heaven,” just as others might say, “We are not on visiting terms.” Every man of genius has his semi-insane points. The greater his genius, the more salient are the peculiarities which constitute the different degrees of his originality. In the provinces an original man is rated as half-insane.

The first words Monsieur Lefebvre said made me doubt my comrade’s madness; while I listened to the old man I mentally criticised his statements. The most important symptom showed itself several days before the marriage was to take place. Louis had a well-defined attack of catalepsy. He remained standing for fifty-nine hours, motionless, his eyes fixed, without speaking or eating, — a purely nervous state into which persons are liable to fall when a prey to violent passions, a phenomenon rare to be sure but whose effects are perfectly well known to physicians. If there were anything extraordinary about this seizure it was that Louis had not already had several attacks of the same malady, to which his habit of ecstasy and the nature of his ideas predisposed him. But his constitution, both external and internal, was so perfect that it had hitherto resisted this strain on his powers. The exaltation to which he was brought by the expectation of his marriage, increased, in him, by the chastity of his body and the power of his soul, might very likely have brought on this nervous crisis, whose results are no better understood than their cause. The foregoing

letters, accidentally preserved, show plainly enough his transition from the pure idealism in which he lived to the most acute physical emotions. In our college days we were filled with admiration for that human phenomenon in which Lambert was able to see the temporary separation of our two natures, and the symptoms of a total absence of the inward being using its mysterious faculties under the rule of some cause as yet undiscovered. Catalepsy, a mystery as deep as sleep itself, formed part of the collection of proof which Louis had annexed to his "Treatise on the Will." While Monsieur Lefebvre was telling me of Lambert's first attack, I suddenly remembered a conversation we had had on this subject after reading a medical book.

"Deep meditation or glorious ecstasy," he said, "may be catalepsy in the bud."

The day when he expressed this thought thus concisely he had been trying to link all moral phenomena together by a chain of effects, — following step by step all actions of the intellect, beginning with the simple stirrings of purely animal instinct, which suffice for so many human beings, especially for certain men whose strength excels in purely mechanical labor; and then passing to the aggregation of thoughts, until he reached comparison, meditation, and finally ecstasy, and thus catalepsy. Undoubtedly Lambert believed, with the artless consciousness of early youth, that he had planned a noble book in thus marshalling the different degrees of mental power in man. I remember that by one of those fatalities which force us to believe in

predestination, we happened upon the "Book of the Martyrs," which relates very curious facts as to the complete abolition of corporeal life to which man can attain during the paroxysms of his inward faculties. Reflecting on the effects of fanaticism, Lambert was led to think that the collection of ideas to which we give the name of sentiments might be the material effluence of some fluid which men produce in more or less abundance according to the manner in which their organs absorb the generating substances in the centres where they live. We grew eager in the study of catalepsy, and, with the ardor which lads put into their undertakings, we tried to endure pain by *thinking of other things*. We fatigued ourselves terribly by trying certain experiments analogous to those of the Spasmodics of the last century, — a religious fanaticism which will some day be of use to human science. I stood on Lambert's stomach for several minutes without causing him the least pain ; but in spite of such foolish experiments, neither of us were attacked with catalepsy.

I have felt it necessary to give the foregoing explanation of my doubts as to Louis's madness, which Monsieur Lefebvre's further statement fully confirmed.

"When the attack was over," he said, "my nephew was seized with terror and fell into a state of the profoundest melancholy. He believed himself impotent. I watched him with the solicitude of a mother for her child, and prevented him one day from performing on himself the operation to which Origen supposed he owed his gifts. I took him at once to Paris and

placed him under the care of Monsieur Esquirol. During the journey Louis remained in a state of almost continual somnolence, and did not recognize me. The physicians in Paris thought him incurable, and unanimously advised his being left in complete solitude, care being taken that nothing should disturb the quiet necessary for his very improbable recovery; they also advised my keeping him in a cool room, somewhat darkened. Mademoiselle de Villenoix, from whom I concealed his actual condition, followed us to Paris and there learned the decision of the doctors. She asked to see my nephew, who scarcely recognized her; she then determined, after the fashion of noble souls, to consecrate her life to his service and give him the care that was necessary for his recovery. ‘I should have been obliged to do so,’ she said, ‘were he my husband; why should I do less for my lover?’ She took Louis to Villenoix, where they have been living for the last two years.”

Instead of continuing my journey I stopped at Blois, intending to go and see Louis. The worthy old priest would not let me stay at an inn, but took me to his own house, where he showed me his nephew’s room, with the books and articles that belonged to him. As he glanced round it a sad exclamation rose to the old man’s lips, revealing the hopes which Lambert’s precocious genius had excited in his mind, and the dreary desolation of his irreparable loss.

“That young man knew all things,” he said, taking down a volume which contained the writings of Spinoza.

“How could a mind so well organized become unhinged?”

“But, Monsieur,” I replied, “may it not have been an effect of his vigorous organization? If he is really the victim of that crisis, so insufficiently observed in its manifestations, which we call *insanity*, I am tempted to ascribe the cause to his passion. His studies, his ways of life, had brought his faculties to a degree of power at which the slightest over-excitement of them compelled nature to give way. Love either destroyed them or raised them to some other mode of expression, which, perhaps, we calumniate as madness, without comprehending its true quality. In short, may he not have foreseen in the pleasures of his marriage an obstacle to the perfectibility of his interior senses and to his flight through the spiritual worlds?”

“My dear sir,” said the old priest, after listening to me very attentively, “your reasoning is no doubt logical; but even if I agreed with it, the melancholy knowledge it imparts would not comfort me for the loss of my nephew.”

Lambert’s uncle was one of the men who live only through the heart.

The next day I started for Villenoix. Monsieur Lefebre accompanied me to the gate of Blois. When he had put me into the road which leads to Villenoix he stopped, and said:—

“You can easily understand that I never go there. Do not forget what I have said to you. In presence of Mademoiselle de Villenoix be careful not to appear to see that Louis is mad.”

The old priest remained where I left him, looking after me until I was out of sight. It was not without deep emotion that I continued my way to Villenoix. Reflections crowded upon me at every step of the way which Louis had so often traversed with a heart full of hope and a soul elated by the promptings of love. The shrubs, the trees, the caprices of the winding way whose borders were rent here and there by tiny ravines, all had the deepest interest for me ; I tried to revive from and through them the thoughts and impressions of my poor comrade. No doubt the evening conversations of which his letters tell, beside the hedge where his mistress met him, had initiated Mademoiselle de Villenoix into the secrets of that vast and noble soul, as in my own case a few years earlier. But the fact which most preoccupied me, and which gave to my pilgrimage a deep interest of curiosity in addition to the half-religious emotions which guided me, was that splendid belief of Mademoiselle de Villenoix in her lover's sanity, of which the old priest had warned me. Had she, as time went on, contracted his madness ; or was she able to enter the portals of that soul and comprehend its thoughts, even the most perplexing ? I lost myself in meditation over this problem of a sentiment higher than the highest inspirations of love and its noblest devotions. To die for another is a common sacrifice. To live faithful to a single love is a heroism that made Mademoiselle Dupuis immortal. If Napoleon the Great and Lord Byron had successors in the hearts that once loved them, we may be allowed to reverence this widow of Bolingbroke ; but Mademoiselle

Dupuis possessed the memory of many years of happiness on which to live, while Mademoiselle de Villenoix, knowing nothing of love but its earliest sentiments, seemed to my eyes the type of self-devotion in its broadest expression. If she had become half-mad, she was sublime; but if, on the other hand, she comprehended and interpreted the madness of him she loved, she added to the beauty of a great heart a master-gift of passion worthy of being studied.

When I saw the high towers of the château, a sight that so often had made poor Lambert quiver, my heart beat violently. I had associated myself, so to speak, with his present life and situation by recalling to mind the events of our boyhood. Before long, I entered a deserted courtyard and even entered the vestibule of the château without meeting any one. The noise of my steps brought out an old woman, to whom I gave a letter which Monsieur Lefebre had written to Mademoiselle de Villenoix. Presently the same woman returned to fetch me, and showed me into a lower room, paved with black and white marble and darkened by closed blinds, at the further end of which I saw, very indistinctly, Louis Lambert.

“Will you take this chair, Monsieur?” said a sweet voice which went to my heart.

Mademoiselle de Villenoix was beside me, though I had not perceived her, and now offered me a chair which at first I did not take. The obscurity of the room was so great that until I grew accustomed to it Mademoiselle de Villenoix and Louis seemed two black

masses projected from the depths of the murky atmosphere. I sat down, a prey to the feelings which overcome us, almost in spite of ourselves, under the sombre arches of a church. My eyes, still influenced by the sunlight, only gradually grew accustomed to the artificial night.

"This gentleman," she said to him, "is your college friend."

Louis made no reply. I could now see him, and the sight was one that stamped itself upon my memory everlastingly. He stood, both elbows resting on a projection of the wood-work, so that his chest seemed to bend under the weight of his bowed head. His hair, which was long like that of a woman, fell over his shoulders and round his face in a manner that gave him some resemblance to the busts of great men of the time of Louis XIV. His face was perfectly white. He rubbed one leg against the other habitually, with a mechanical movement that nothing could check, and the continual friction of the two bones produced a distressing noise. Near him was a mattress made of moss, lying on a plank.

"He seldom lies down," Mademoiselle de Villenoix said to me; "when he does, he sleeps for several days."

Louis stood, just as I now saw him, day and night, with fixed eyes, never raising or lowering the lids, as others do. Having asked Mademoiselle de Villenoix whether a little more light would pain him, I slightly opened one blind, and could then see the expression

of my friend's countenance. Alas! already wrinkled, already blanched! no longer any light in the eyes, which were glassy like those of the blind. All his features seemed drawn by some convulsion toward the top of his head. I tried to speak to him from time to time; but he did not hear me. He was a corpse snatched from a tomb, a sort of conquest won by life over death, or by death over life. I was there nearly an hour, lost in undefinable revery, harrowed by afflicting thoughts. I listened to Mademoiselle de Villenoix who told me all the details of this, as it were, infant life. Suddenly Louis ceased to rub his legs one against the other, and said slowly, "*The angels are white.*"

I cannot explain the effect produced upon me by these words, by the sound of that loved voice, by the tones I was painfully awaiting, which now seemed to take him forever away from me. In spite of myself, tears filled my eyes. An involuntary consciousness passed rapidly through my soul, and made me doubt more strongly than ever if Louis's reason had left him. I was very certain that he neither saw nor heard me, but the harmonies of that voice, which seemed to speak a joy divine, communicated to the words he had uttered an irresistible power. Incomplete revelation of an unknown world, that saying echoed in our souls like some glorious chime of bells heard in the silence of a darksome night. I no longer wondered why Mademoiselle de Villenoix thought him sane. Perhaps the life of the soul had annihilated the life of the body. Perhaps his companion had had, as I had then, vague intuitions of

that melodious and flowering Nature which we call, in its highest development, HEAVEN. This woman, this angel, was ever there, sitting at her tapestry frame, and looking up to him with a sad and tender expression as she drew the needle through her work. Unable to bear the dreadful sight, for I could not, like Mademoiselle de Villenoix, divine its secrets, I left the room; she followed me and we walked up and down for some time while she spoke of herself and of Lambert.

“No doubt Louis appears to be insane,” she said, “but he is not so, if the word insanity is applied only to those whose brain, from unknown causes, becomes vitiated, and who are, therefore, unable to give a reason for their acts. The equilibrium of my husband’s mind is perfect. If he does not recognize you corporeally, do not think that he has not seen you. He is able to disengage his body and to see us under another form, I know not of what nature. When he speaks, he says marvellous things. Only, in fact often, he completes in speech an idea begun in the silence of his mind, or else he begins a proposition in words and finishes it mentally. To other men he must appear insane; to me, who live in his thought, all his ideas are lucid. I follow the path of his mind; and though I cannot understand many of its turnings and digressions, I, nevertheless, reach the end with him. Does it not often happen that while thinking of some trifling matter, we are drawn into serious thought by the gradual unfolding of ideas and recollections? Often, after speaking of some frivolous thing, the accidental point of departure for rapid

meditation, a thinker forgets, or neglects to mention the abstract links which have led him to his conclusions, and takes up in speech only the last rings in the chain of reflections. Common minds to whom this quickness of mental vision is unknown, and who are ignorant of the inward travail of the soul, laugh at dreamers and call them madmen if they are given to such forgetfulness of connecting thoughts. Louis is always so; he wings his way through the spaces of thought with the agility of a swallow; yet I can follow him in all his circlings. That is the history of his so-called madness. Perhaps he will one day return to this world in which we vegetate; but if now he breathes the air of heaven before the time appointed for us to live there, why should we wish him back among us? I am content to hear the beating of his heart; it is happiness enough for me to live beside him. Is he not all mine? Twice in the last two years and at separate times, I have regained him for several days, — once in Switzerland, and again in Brittany, where I took him for sea-bathing. I can live on those memories.”

“But,” I said, “do you not write down the thoughts he sometimes utters?”

“Why should I?” she answered.

I kept silence; human science was petty indeed beside this woman.

“At first, when he began to speak,” she added, “I gathered together a few sentences, but I soon ceased to do so. I was unable then to understand him.”

I asked her for that record, mutely, by a glance. She understood me; the following thoughts are those that I thus rescued from oblivion.

I.

Here below, all is the product of an **ETHEREAL SUBSTANCE**, the common base of several phenomena known under the vulgar names of Electricity, Heat, Light, Galvanic and Magnetic Fluid, etc. The universality of the transmutations of this Substance constitutes what is commonly called Matter.

II.

The brain is a retort, where the **ANIMAL** carries, according to the strength of the apparatus, all that each one of its constituent parts is able to absorb of that **SUBSTANCE**; and out of which it issues in the form of Will.

Will is a fluid, the attribute of every being endowed with motion. Hence the innumerable forms which the **ANIMAL** takes on; which are the effects of its combination with **SUBSTANCE**. Its instincts are the product of the necessities forced upon it by the conditions in which it develops. Hence its varieties.

III.

In man, Will becomes a force characteristic of the human species; surpassing in intensity that of all other species.

IV.

By constant nutrition Will is related to SUBSTANCE ; finding it in all transmutations when penetrated by Thought, — which is a product peculiar to the human Will combined with modifications of SUBSTANCE.

V.

From the greater or the lesser perfection of the human apparatus come the innumerable forms which Thought assumes.

VI.

Will is exerted by organs vulgarly called the five senses ; which are in fact but one, namely, the faculty of seeing. Touch and taste, hearing and smell, are sight, adapted to those transformations of SUBSTANCE which a man can grasp in its two conditions, modified and unmodified.

VII.

All things pertaining, through Form, to the domain of a single sense, namely, the faculty of sight, reduce themselves to a few elementary bodies whose principles are in the air, in the light, or in the principles of air and light. Sound is a modification of air ; all colors are modifications of light ; all perfumes are a combination of air and light ; consequently, the four manifestations of matter in its relation to man, namely, sound, color, perfume, and form, have one and the same origin ;

the day is not far off when the affiliation of the principles of light with those of air will be recognized. Thought, allied to light, expresses itself by words, allied to sound. For it, therefore, all is derived from SUBSTANCE, the transformations of which differ only by NUMBER, by a given quantity, the proportions of which produce the individuals or the things constituting the divisions of nature called KINGDOMS.

VIII.

When SUBSTANCE is absorbed in a sufficing Number it converts man into an apparatus of enormous power, which communicates with the essence itself of Substance, and acts upon organized nature after the manner of great currents which absorb little ones. Volition sets to work this force, which is independent of thought, and, by its concentration, acquires some of the properties of SUBSTANCE, such as the rapidity of light, the interpenetrating quality of electricity, the faculty of saturating bodies; to which must be added intelligent knowledge of what it does. But there is in man a primal and controlling phenomenon which admits of no analysis. Decompose man to the utmost, and we may perhaps discover the elements of Thought and of Will, but we shall also find, without being able to solve it, the unknown quantity, that X against which I vainly flung myself in earlier days. This X is the Logos, whose touch burns and destroys all such as are not prepared to receive it. It ceaselessly engenders SUBSTANCE.

IX.

Anger, like all our passionate expressions, is a current of human force acting electrically ; its agitation, when it is disengaged, acts upon persons present even if they are neither the object nor the cause of it. Do we not meet with men who, by a discharge of their volition, reduce and refine the sentiments of the masses ?

X.

Fanaticism, and all other sentiments, are Living Forces. These forces become in certain beings rivers of Will, which gather up and carry away everything.

XI.

If space exists, certain faculties bestow the power of traversing it with such rapidity that their effects are equivalent to its abolition. From thy couch to the frontiers of the world there are but two steps : WILL — FAITH.

XII.

Facts are nought ; they do not exist ; Ideas alone subsist.

XIII.

The world of Ideas divides itself into three spheres, — that of Instinct ; that of Abstractions ; that of Specialism.

XIV.

The greater part of visible Humanity, that is, the weaker part, inhabits the sphere of Instinctivity. The Instinctives are born, work, and die without rising to the second degree of human intelligence, namely, Abstraction.

XV.

At Abstraction Society begins. Though Abstraction as compared with Instinct is an almost divine power, it is infinitely feeble compared with the endowment of Specialism, which alone can explain God. Abstraction comprises within it a whole nature in germ, as potentially as the seed contains the system of a plant and all its products. From Abstraction are derived laws, arts, interests, social ideas. It is the glory and scourge of the world. Glorious, it creates societies; baneful, it exempts man from entering the path of Specialism which leads to the Infinite. Man judges all things by his abstractions, — good, evil, virtue, crime. His formulas of right are his scales, and his justice is blind; the justice of God sees, — in that is everything. There are, necessarily, intermediate beings who separate the Kingdom of the Instinctives from the Kingdom of the Abstractives, in whom Instinctivity mixes with Abstractivity in endless variety of proportion. Some have more of the former than of the latter, and *vice versa*. Also, there are beings in whom the action of each is neutralized because both are moved by an equal force.

XVI.

Specialism consists in seeing the things of the material world as well as those of the spiritual world in their original and consequential ramifications. The highest human genius is that which starts from the shadows of Abstraction to advance into the light of Specialism. (Specialism, *species*, sight, speculation, seeing all, and that at one glance: *Speculum*, the mirror or means of estimating a thing by seeing it in its entirety.) Jesus was a Specialist. He saw the deed in its roots and in its products; in the past which begot it, in the present where it is manifested, in the future where it develops; his sight penetrated the understanding of others. The perfection of the inward sight gives birth to the gift of Specialism. Specialism carries with it Intuition. Intuition is a faculty of the INNER MAN, of whom Specialism is an attribute. It acts by an imperceptible sensation, of which he who obeys it is ignorant — witness Napoleon instinctively changing his position before the bullet came which would have struck him.

XVII.

Between the sphere of Specialism and the sphere of Abstraction, and likewise between those spheres and that of Instinctivity, we find beings in whom the diverse attributes of the two kingdoms are mingled, producing a mixed nature, — the man of genius.

XVIII.

The Specialist is necessarily the loftiest expression of MAN,—the link which connects the visible to the superior worlds. He acts, he sees, he feels through his INNER BEING. The Abstractive thinks. The Instinctive simply acts.

XIX.

Hence three degrees for Man. As an Instinctive he is below the level; as an Abstractive he attains to it; as a Specialist he rises above it. Specialism opens to man his true career; the Infinite dawns upon him, he catches a glimpse of his destiny.

XX.

There exist three worlds—the NATURAL WORLD, the SPIRITUAL WORLD, the DIVINE WORLD. Humanity moves hither and thither in the Natural World, which is fixed neither in its essence nor in its properties. The Spiritual World is fixed in its essence and variable in its properties. The Divine World is fixed in its properties and in its essence. Consequently, there is a material worship, a spiritual worship, a divine worship; which three are manifested by Action, Word, and Prayer, or (to express it otherwise) Deed, Understanding, Love. The Instinctive desires deeds; the Abstractive turns to ideas; the Specialist sees the End, he aspires to God, whom he inwardly perceives or contemplates.

XXI.

Therefore, perhaps one day the inverse sense of *ET VERBO CARO FACTUM* will be the epitome of a new Gospel which will read: "AND THE FLESH SHALL BE MADE THE WORD; IT SHALL BECOME THE UTTERANCE OF GOD."

XXII.

The resurrection is brought about by the winds of heaven which sweep the worlds. The Angel borne upon the blast saith not: "Ye Dead, arise!" he saith, "Arise, ye living!"

Such are the thoughts to which I have been able, not without great difficulty, to give expression within the limits of our understanding. There were other thoughts which Pauline more particularly recollected — for what reason I know not. These I have also transcribed; but, remembering the intellect from which they emanated, the mind that seeks to comprehend them is led almost to despair. I shall, however, cite a few, partly to complete my sketch of this being, partly because in these, his last ideas, Lambert's formula takes firmer hold upon the worlds than the first here given, which seems to apply only to the zoölogic movement. But between the two fragments there is evident correlation to the eyes of those persons, few indeed! who care to plunge into the gulfs of intellect.

I.

All things here below exist only by Motion and by Number.

II.

Motion is in one sense Number in action.

III.

Motion is the product of a force engendered by the Word and by a resistance which is Matter. Without resistance, motion would have been resultless ; its action would have been infinite. Newton's attraction of gravitation is not a law, but an effect of the general law of universal Motion.

IV.

Motion, by reason of resistance, produces a combination which is life ; so soon as the one or the other becomes the stronger, life ceases.

V.

Nowhere is motion sterile ; everywhere it engenders Number ; but it may be neutralized by a superior resistance, as in minerals.

VI.

Number, which produces all varieties, at the same time generates Harmony, which, in its highest acceptation, is the relation between Parts and Unity.

VII.

Without Motion all would be one and the same substance. Its products, identical in their essence, are differentiated only by the Number which determines faculties.

VIII.

Man is related to faculties ; the angel is related to essence.

IX.

By uniting his body to elementary action, man may succeed in joining himself to the light by his INTERIOR.

X.

Number is an intellectual witness which belongs only to man, and by which he may arrive at the knowledge of the Word.

XI.

There is a number which Impurity cannot transcend ; the Number wherein creation is finished.

XII.

Unity has been the point of departure for everything which has been produced ; thence have resulted Composites ; but the end must be identical with the beginning. Hence the *spiritual* formula : Composite Unity, variable Unity, fixed Unity.

XIII.

The Universe is, then, variety in Unity. Motion is the means, Number is the result. The end is the return of all things to Unity, which is God.

XIV.

THREE and SEVEN are the two great *spiritual* numbers.

XV.

THREE is the formula of the created worlds. It is the *spiritual* symbol of creation, as it is the *material* symbol of circumference. In effect, God proceeded only by circular lines. The straight line is an attribute of Infinity; therefore man, who adumbrates the Infinite, employs it in his works. Two is the Number of generation. THREE is the Number of existence, which includes generation and its product. Add the Quaternary and you have SEVEN, which is the formula of heaven. God is above all; he is Unity.

I went to see Lambert once again. On that occasion, after taking leave of his wife, I came back a prey to ideas so antagonistic to social existence that I renounced, in spite of my promises, another visit to Villenoix. The sight of Louis exercised a mysterious and dangerous influence over me. I feared to put myself again in that intoxicating atmosphere, where ecstasy

was contagious. Every man would have felt, as I did, a desire to plunge into the infinite, — like those soldiers who killed themselves in a sentry-box where one of their number had committed suicide while the regiment was in camp at Boulogne. Napoleon was obliged to burn that box of wood, a depository, as it were, of ideas which had reached a condition of deadly miasma. Louis's chamber was to me analogous to that sentry-box. These two facts may be cited as additional proofs in support of his theory on the transmission of Will. In his presence I felt extraordinary emotions, which surpassed the most fantastic effects produced by tea, coffee, opium, sleep, and fever, — mysterious agents whose strange power so often affects the mind. Perhaps I might have made a complete book out of these fragments of thoughts, which will ever be incomprehensible to all but certain minds who are trained to bend over the brink of abysses in hopes of discovering the bottom. The life of that immense brain, which gave way doubtless on all sides, like too vast an empire, would, it is true, have been developed in a recital of the visions of this being, so incomplete either through excess of force or through weakness; but I have preferred to render a faithful account of my impressions rather than compose a work that might be more or less poetic.

Lambert died aged twenty-eight, on the 25th of September, 1824, in the arms of his beloved. She buried him on one of the islands of the park of Villenoix. His grave is covered by a simple stone cross, without name

or date. Flower born on the borders of the abyss, he dropped unknown, with all his mysterious colors and perfumes, into its depths. Like many other uncomprehended persons, he had often proudly longed to plunge into the void and abandon there the secrets of his life. Still, Pauline de Villenoix had every right to inscribe that cross with Lambert's name, together with an indication of her own. Since the loss of her husband, reunion is the hope of every hour of her life. The vanities of grief are foreign to a soul like hers. Villenoix is falling to ruin. Lambert's wife has abandoned it, doubtless that she may remember it better as it was. Lately she was heard to say:—

“To me, his heart—to God, his genius.”

FACINO CANE.

FACINO CANE.



TO LOUISE.

AS A MARK OF MY AFFECTIONATE GRATITUDE.

I WAS then living in a little street which you probably do not know, the rue de Lesdiguières, which begins at the rue Saint-Antoine opposite to the fountain near the place de la Bastille, and opens into the rue de la Cerisaie. Love of science had driven me to a garret, where I worked during the night, passing my days in the library of MONSIEUR, which was near by. I lived frugally, taking upon me the conditions of monastic life, so essential to workers. I seldom walked for pleasure as far as the boulevard Bourdon, even when the weather was fine. One sole passion drew me away from my studious habits; but even that was a form of study. I walked the streets to observe the manners and ways of the faubourg, to study its inhabitants and learn their characters. Ill-dressed as the workmen themselves, and quite as indifferent to the proprieties, there was nothing about me to put them on their guard. I mingled in their groups, watched their bargains, heard their disputes, at the hour when their day's work ended. The faculty of observation had become intuitive with me; I

could enter the souls of others, while still conscious of their bodies, — or rather, I grasped external details so thoroughly that my mind instantly passed beyond them ; I possessed, in short, the faculty of living the life of the individual on whom I exercised my observation, and of substituting myself for him, like the dervish in the Arabian Nights who assumed the body and soul of those over whom he pronounced certain words.

Often, between eleven o'clock and midnight, when I met some workman and his wife returning home from the Ambigu-Comique, I amused myself by following them from the boulevard du Pont-aux-Choux to the boulevard Beaumarchais. These worthy folks usually talked first of the piece they had just seen ; then, from one thing to another, they came to their own affairs ; the mother dragged her child along by the hand without paying attention to his complaints or inquiries ; husband and wife counted up their gains ; told what they expected to make on the morrow, and spent that sum in fancy in a dozen different ways. Then they dropped into household details, groaned over the excessive cost of potatoes, or the coldness of the winter, the increased price of fuel, and the energetic remonstrances they were forced to make to the baker. Their discussions often grew heated, and each side betrayed his and her character in picturesque language. As I listened to these persons, I imbibed their life, I felt their ragged clothing on my back, my feet walked in their broken shoes ; their desires, their wants, passed into my soul, or my soul passed into theirs. It was the dream of a waking

man. I grew angry, with them, against some foreman who ill-used them; against annoying customers who obliged them to call many times before they could get their money. To quit my own life, to become some other individual through the exaltation of a moral faculty, and to play this game at will, was the relaxation of my studious hours.

To what have I owed this gift? Was it second-sight? Is it one of those qualities the abuse of which leads to insanity? I have never sought to discover the causes of this power. I only know that I possess it, and use it; that is enough for me. You must know that ever since I became aware of this faculty, I have decomposed the elements of those heterogeneous masses called the People, and I have analyzed them in a manner that enables me to appraise both their good and evil qualities. I knew, before the time came to prove it, what use "*the faubourg*" would be put to, — that seminary of revolution from which have emerged heroes, inventors, practically learned men, knaves, scoundrels, virtues, vices; all repressed by poverty, stifled by want, drowned in wine, worn-out by the use of strong liquors. You cannot imagine how many lost epics, how many forgotten dramas there are in this city of sorrows! how many horrible things, how many glorious things! Imagination cannot reach to a full conception of what is hidden here, in quest of which no man can go; he would be forced to descend too low to find these startling scenes of tragedy or of comedy, masterpieces to which, often, mere accident gives birth. I hardly know

why I have so long refrained from telling you the following story; it is one of the many curious tales put away in a bag from which memory pulls them forth capriciously, like numbers in a lottery. I have others quite as singular buried in my mind, but, you may depend upon it, they shall see the light some day.

One morning my charwoman, the wife of a laboring man, asked me to honor the wedding of her sister with my presence. To make you understand the sort of wedding it was likely to be, I must tell you that I paid forty sous a month to this poor creature, who came every morning to make my bed, clean my shoes, brush my clothes, sweep the room, and prepare my breakfast; the rest of her time was spent in turning the crank of an engine, — a form of hard labor which brought her in ten sous a day. Her husband, a cabinet-maker, earned four francs; but as these parents had three children, their wages were barely enough for a decent living. I have never seen more solid honesty than that of this man and woman. For five years after I left the neighborhood, mère Vaillant always came to wish me happy returns on my birthday, bringing with her a bunch of flowers and some oranges, — poor soul, who never in her life could lay by ten sous. Poverty brought us near together. I was never able to give her more than ten francs, often borrowed for the occasion. This may explain my promise to go to the wedding; I expected to revel in the happiness of these poor creatures.

The feast and the ball took place at the house of a wine-merchant in the rue de Charenton, in a large room,

lighted by lamps with tin reflectors and hung with a paper that was greasy behind the wooden seats which ran round the walls. In this room were assembled eighty persons in their Sunday clothes, bedizened with ribbons and nosegays, dancing with flushed faces as if the world were coming to an end. The bride and bridegroom kissed each other to the general satisfaction, with a chorus of "Hey, hey's," and "Ha, ha's," which were significant but really less indecent than the timid glances of well-educated young girls. The whole company gave evidence of a coarse enjoyment which had something contagious in it.

However, neither the characteristics of this assembly, nor the wedding, nor anything concerning it, has to do with my story. Remember only the oddness of the setting; see the shabby room, painted red, smell the fumes of wine, hear the roars of delight, imagine yourself in *the* faubourg, among these workmen, these old men, these poor women, giving themselves up to enjoyment for one night.

The orchestra consisted of three blind men from the Quinze-Vingts;¹ the first a violin, the second a clarionet, the third a flute. The three were paid, in a lump, seven francs for the evening. At that price they were not likely to give Rossini nor Beethoven; they played what they would and as they could; and no one found fault with them, out of delicacy. Their music as-

¹ The Quinze-Vingts is a hospital in Paris, founded by Louis IX. (Saint-Louis) for three hundred knights whose eyes were put out by the Saracens.

saulted my tympanum so violently that after one glance at the assembled company I looked at the blind trio and was instantly moved to forgiveness when I saw their uniform. The musicians were seated in the recess of a window, and it was necessary to stand quite near them to distinguish their faces; I did not go up to them at once, but when I did so the wedding and the music became as nought, my curiosity was excited to the highest pitch, for my soul passed into the body of the player of the clarionet. The violin and the flute both had common faces, the well-known face of the blind, full of a contentious spirit, attentive and serious; but that of the clarionet presented one of those phenomena which instantly arrest the attention of artists and philosophers.

Imagine to yourself a plaster mask of Dante lighted by the ruddy glare of an oil lamp, and surmounted by a forest of silvery-white hair. The bitter and distressful expression of that magnificent head was increased by the man's blindness, for the dead eyes lived anew through thought; burning gleams were emitted from the sightless balls, produced by one incessant, solitary desire, vigorously stamped on that projecting brow, which was furrowed by wrinkles like the courses of a stone wall. The old man blew his instrument as he pleased, paying no attention to time or tune; his fingers went up or down, pressing the old stops by a mere mechanical habit; he took no pains to avoid *couacs* (to use an orchestral term for the quacking of false notes), but the dancers paid no attention to them, neither did the two acolytes of my Italian, — for I felt sure he was an Ital-

ian, and so he proved. There was something grand and despotic in this old Homer who bore a forgotten or unknown Odyssey within him ; a grandeur so real that it still triumphed even in its overthrow ; a despotism so undying that it mastered poverty. None of the violent passions which lead men to good as well as to evil, making one a hero and another a galley-slave, were lacking in that face so nobly modelled, so vividly Italian ; shaded by gray eyebrows which threw their shadow over those blind cavities, where the apparition of the light of thought made the spectator shudder, as one who sees a band of brigands armed with daggers issuing from a cavern's mouth. There was a lion in that cage of flesh, a lion who spent his useless rage against the iron bars of his prison. The conflagration of despair had died to ashes, the lava had stiffened and was cold ; but furrows, convulsions, a little smoke bore witness to the violence of the eruption and the ravages of the flames. These ideas, suggested by the sight of that man, were as hot in his soul as they were cold and dead upon his face.

Between each quadrille the violin and the flute, solemnly concerned for glass and bottle, hung their instruments to a button of each shabby coat and moved their hands cautiously to a little table on which their refreshments stood ; always offering a full glass to the Italian, who was unable to reach it for himself, the table being placed behind his chair. Each time that his companions paid him this attention the clarionet thanked them with a friendly nod. Their movements were all per-

formed with the precision which is so noticeable among the pensioners of the Quinze-Vingts, and leads one almost to imagine that those blind men see. I approached the musicians to hear them talk, but when I was near them they evidently studied me and seemed aware that I was not a working-man; they grew reserved at once.

"What countryman are you,—you who play the clarionet?" I said.

"I come from Venice," answered the blind man with a slight Italian accent.

"Were you born blind or did you become so?"

"I became so," he answered, quickly, "a cursed paralysis of the retina."

"Venice is a beautiful city; I have always longed to go there."

The old man's face lighted up, his wrinkles quivered, and he showed signs of strong emotion.

"If I went with you you would not lose your time," he said, significantly.

"Don't talk to him of Venice," said the violin. "If you do, the doge will be unmanageable; and he has got two bottles already under his waistcoat, the prince!"

"Come, play away, père Canet!" cried the flute.

All three began to play; but all the time they were executing four quadrilles the Venetian seemed to be scenting me, as though he guessed the sudden and extreme interest I felt in him. His countenance lost its chilling aspect of distress; something like hope enlivened his features and slid like a blue flame among their

wrinkles ; he smiled and wiped his brow, that bold and awful brow, and even assumed the gayety of a man who mounts a hobby.

“How old are you?” I asked him.

“Eighty-two.”

“When did you become blind?”

“Nearly fifty years ago,” he replied, in a tone that showed me his grief was not caused by the loss of sight only, but by the loss of some great power of which he had been robbed.

“Why do they call you doge?” I asked.

“Oh! that is a joke,” he replied. “I am a patrician of Venice, and might have been a doge like any other.”

“What is your name?”

“Here,” he said, “they call me *père Canet*. My name is always written thus on the registers ; but in Italy I am Marco Facino Cane, Principe di Varese.”

“What! you are descended from the famous captain, Facino Cane, whose conquests passed to the Duke of Milan?”

“*È vero*,” he replied. “At that time Cane’s son took refuge in Venice to escape being killed by the Visconti, and had himself inscribed on the *Libro d’oro*. But now neither Cane nor Golden Book remain of all that past!” and he made a dreadful gesture of extinct patriotism and of hatred for all things human.

“But if you were senator of Venice you ought to be rich ; how is it you have lost your wealth?”

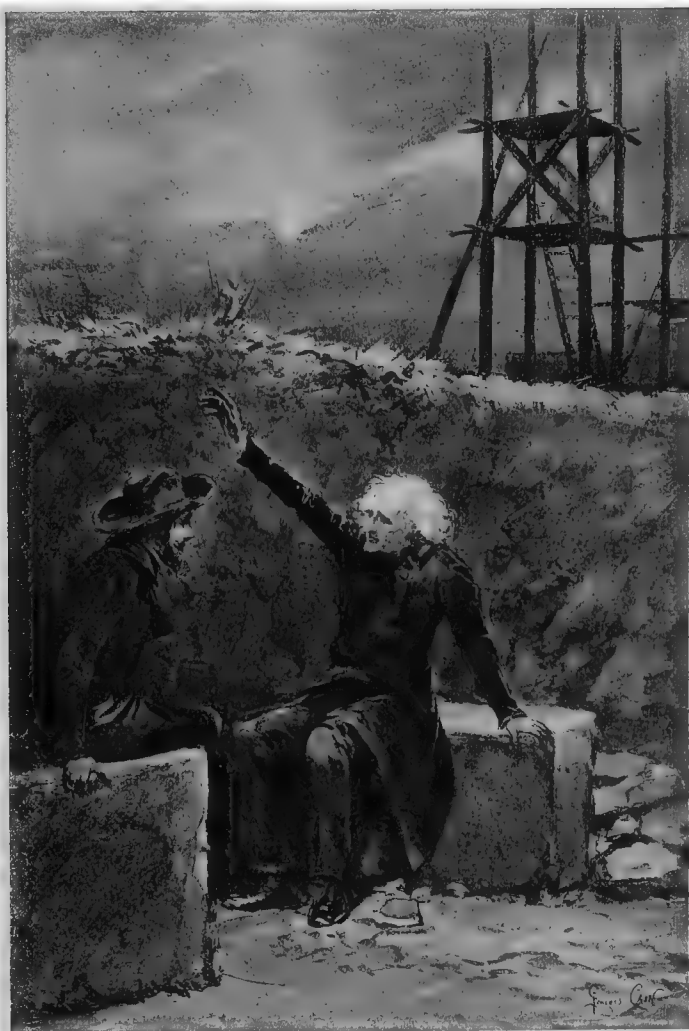
At this question he raised his head, with a tragic movement, as if to gaze fixedly at me, and replied, —

“Through misfortune.”

He no longer thought of drinking, and refused with his hand a glass which the old flute was offering him at this moment; then he bowed his head.

These details were not of a nature to extinguish my curiosity. During the quadrille which the three machines now played, I gazed at the old Venetian noble with the excited feelings natural to a young man of twenty. I saw Venice and the Adriatic; I beheld the ruined city in that ruined face; I floated amid those palaces so dear to their inhabitants; I passed from the Rialto to the Salute, from the riva degli Schiavoni to the Lido; then back to the marvellous San Marco, so original and so sublime; I looked at the windows of the Casa d'Oro, each with its different tracery; I contemplated, as I glided past, those old *palazzi* so rich in marbles, and all those many wonders with which the scholar sympathizes, the more because he colors them with knowledge, and is conscious that their present reality is powerless to depoetize his dream. In fancy I reviewed the life of this descendant of the famous *condottiere*; I looked for traces of his misfortunes and for the causes of the physical and moral degradation which rendered his sudden gleam of greatness and revived nobility more striking still. Our thoughts were no doubt in common, his and mine; for I believe that blindness renders mental communication far more rapid by preventing the attention from frittering itself away on outside objects. The proof of our sympathetic thought was not long in coming. Facino Cane ceased

· I sat upon another stone directly facing the old man, whose white hairs glittered like silver threads in the effulgence of the moon.' ”



playing, rose, came up to me and said, "Let us go!" in a tone and manner which struck me like an electric shock. I gave him my arm, and we went out.

When we reached the street he said: "Take me to Venice! will you take me there? will you have faith in me? If you will, you shall be richer than the ten richest merchants in Amsterdam or London; richer than the Rothschilds; rich with all the riches of the Arabian Nights.

I thought him mad; but there was a power in his voice that compelled my obedience. I allowed him to guide me, and he proceeded toward the fosses of Belleville as if he had eyes to see. He seated himself on a stone in a very solitary spot where the bridge by which the canal Saint-Martin now communicates with the Seine was subsequently built. I sat upon another stone directly facing the old man, whose white hairs glittered like silver threads in the effulgence of the moon. The silence about us, scarcely broken by the rumbling noises of the distant boulevard, the clearness of the night, all contributed to the weird aspect of the scene.

"You talk of millions to a young man," I said, "and you think he would hesitate to face a thousand evils to obtain them! Are you not jesting with me?"

"May I die without confession," he said vehemently, "if what I tell you is not true. I was twenty years old, as you are now; I was rich, I was handsome, I was noble. I began with the first madness, love. I loved as men do not love in these days, — enough to hide in a coffer and risk a poignard without receiving

anything more than the promise of a kiss. To die for *her* seemed to me to live a lifetime. In 1760 I loved a Vendramini, a girl of eighteen, married to a Sagredo, one of the richest senators, a man of thirty, frantically in love with his wife. My mistress and I were as innocent as two cherubim when the *sposo* surprised us talking of love; I was unarmed, his sword missed me; I sprang at his throat and strangled him with both hands as you wring the neck of a chicken. I wanted to fly with Bianca, but she would not go with me. Such are women! I went alone; I was condemned; my property confiscated to my heirs; but I carried off my diamonds, five Titians rolled up, and all my gold. I went to Milan, where I was not molested; my affair was of no interest to the State.

“Allow me a little remark before continuing my story,” he said, after a pause. “Whether a woman’s fancies affect the child she conceives and bears I know not, but it is certain that my mother had a passion for gold during her pregnancy. I have a monomania for it, the gratification of which is so essential to my life that all through my vicissitudes I am never without gold in my possession; I handle it, finger it, incessantly; when I was young I wore jewelry, and I always carried two or three hundred ducats about me.”

So saying, he drew two ducats from his pocket and showed them to me.

“I *feel* the presence of gold. Though blind, I can always stop before a jeweller’s window. That passion was my ruin; I became a gambler for the sake of gold.

I was not a swindler, but I was swindled, and was ruined. When I had no longer any money I was seized with a desperate desire to see Bianca. I returned secretly to Venice; I found her. I was happy for six months, hidden in her house and fed by her. I thought with delight that I should end my days in that way. But Bianca was sought in marriage by the Proveditore. He suspected a rival (in Italy they scent rivals); he watched us, and surprised us, the scoundrel! Fancy what a struggle it was! But I did not kill him; I only wounded him severely. That affair destroyed my happiness. From that day forth I never found a second Bianca. I have enjoyed great pleasures; I lived at the court of Louis XV. among the most celebrated women; but nowhere have I found the noble qualities, the grace, the love of my dear Venetian lady. The Proveditore had his people within call; the palace was surrounded, invaded. I defended myself, that I might die before Bianca's eyes. Formerly she would not fly with me; now, after six months' happiness, she desired to die my death, and received several wounds. A huge mantle was thrown over me, and I was rolled in it, carried to a gondola, and thrown into a dungeon in the vaults of the ducal palace. I was twenty-two years old, and I held the hilt of my broken sword so firmly that to get it from me they would have had to cut off my wrist. By remarkable luck, — or rather, inspired by a sense of precaution, I hid that bit of iron in a corner of the vault, thinking it might some day help me. I was nursed and cared for. My wounds were not mortal.

At twenty-two we can live through everything. Doubtless I was to die decapitated. I pretended continued illness to gain time. I felt sure I was in a dungeon adjoining the canal. My plan was to escape by tunnelling the wall and swimming across the canal, at the risk of being drowned. Here is the reasoning on which I rested my hopes: each time the jailer opened the door to bring my food I read the indications written on the walls, such as, 'Palace side,' 'Canal side,' 'Subterranean side,' and I came at last to conceive a plan of escape connected with the existing state of the Ducal palace, which has never been finished. With the genius that the hope of freedom inspires, and by feeling with my fingers along the face of a stone, I contrived to decipher an Arabic inscription by which the inscriber informed his successors that he had loosened two stones in the lower course and had tunnelled eleven feet under ground. To continue his work it was necessary to spread the fragments of stone and mortar over the floor of the dungeon itself. Even if the jailers or the inquisitors had not been, as they were, so satisfied with the construction of the massive building that no watch was kept on the interior, it would always have been easy to raise the level of the soil gradually because of the position of the cells, which were at the bottom of a flight of steps. This immense toil had all been wasted, at least for the man who had undertaken it, for its unfinished condition was a proof of his death. His devoted labor would be lost forever unless some succeeding prisoner should have a knowl-

edge of Arabic. Fortunately, I had studied the oriental languages in the Armenian convent. A sentence inscribed on the back of the stone told the fate of the unfortunate man, who died a victim to his enormous wealth, which Venetian greed had coveted and seized.

“It took me a month,” continued the old man, who had paused to consider his words, “before I came to any result. While I worked, and during the moments when overcome by fatigue I rested, I could hear the sound of gold; I saw gold glittering before me, I was dazzled by the light of diamonds. Wait, wait! I have more to tell. One night my blunted steel struck wood. I sharpened that fragment of a sword and cut a hole in the wood. To do this work I wriggled like a snake on my belly; I even went naked to work, as the moles do, with my hands in front of me, propelling my body by the stones. The night but one before I was to be taken up for judgment I resolved on a final effort. My broken blade made a hole in the wood and touched nothing beyond it. Imagine my astonishment at what I saw when I applied an eye to the hole. I found myself at the roof of a vault where the feeble glimmer of a light showed me heaps of gold. The doge and one of the Ten were in this vault; I heard their voices, and what they said informed me that here was the secret treasure of the republic, the offerings of the doges; the reservation of spoils, called the ‘perquisite of Venice,’ which was levied on the proceeds of the expeditions. I was saved! When the jailer came I proposed to him to assist my escape and to fly with me, carrying all that

we could possibly take with us. He agreed ; he did not even hesitate. A vessel was just sailing for the Levant ; all precautions were taken. Bianca, to whom my accomplice went, approved my plans. Not to excite suspicion, she was to follow and rejoin me in Smyrna. The next night we enlarged the hole and climbed down upon the treasure."

"What a night ! what a night !" cried the old man, quivering at the recollection. "I saw four huge tuns overflowing with gold. In the adjoining vault silver was amassed in two great heaps, leaving a path between them to cross the room, which they filled to the height of six feet. I thought the gaoler would have gone mad ; he sang, he danced, he laughed, he jumped upon the gold. I threatened to strangle him if he wasted time, or continued to make a noise. In his delirium he did not see a table on which the precious stones were piled. I sprang to them and filled my sailor jacket and the pockets of my trousers. Good God ! I could not take a third of the dazzling heap. Under that table were bars of gold. I persuaded my companion to fill as many sacks with gold as we were able to carry ; pointing out to him that gold could not lead to our discovery in a foreign land ; 'whereas,' I said, 'jewels and precious stones would certainly be recognized.' But however great our longing, we could take only two thousand pounds of gold, and even they necessitated six trips across the prison to the gondola. The sentinel at the water-gate was in our pay, bought by ten pounds of gold. As for the gon-

doliers, they thought they were employed for the Republic. At break of day we started. When fairly at sea and I could think of what had happened, — when I recalled my sensations and saw again in my mind's eye that vast treasury where, according to my valuation, I had been forced to leave behind me thirty millions of silver, twenty millions of gold, and many millions in diamonds, pearls, and rubies, — I became, as it were, insane. The fever of gold was upon me.

“ Well,” he continued, after a moment's silence, “ we landed at Smyrna, and immediately re-embarked for France. As we boarded the French vessel God was so good as to relieve me of my accomplice. At the moment, I did not reflect on the consequences of this accident, in which I then rejoiced heartily. We were so completely enervated with toil and emotion that we sat partly stupefied, without a word to each other, waiting for perfect safety before we dared to enjoy our good fortune at our ease. It is not surprising that the fellow's head turned giddy — You will see how God punished me. I thought I was safe and happy after selling two-thirds of my diamonds in London and Amsterdam, and putting my gold into commercial property. I lived hidden in Madrid for five years; then, in 1770, I came to Paris under a Spanish name, and led a brilliant life. Bianca was dead. In the midst of my pleasures, in the full enjoyment of millions, I was struck blind. No doubt this affliction was originally caused by living in a dungeon and working through the stone wall, — unless indeed my faculty for seeing gold

entailed an abuse of visual power which predestined me to lose my sight. At this particular time I was in love with a woman whom I thought of marrying. I had told her the secret of my name; she herself belonged to a powerful family, and I hoped much from the favor shown to me by Louis XV. I placed great confidence in this woman, who was a friend of Madame du Barry; she advised me to consult an oculist in London. After a stay of some months in that city, she one day abandoned me in Hyde Park, robbing me of all my property and leaving me helpless; for, compelled as I was to hide my name in dread of Venetian vengeance, I could ask succor from no one. I feared Venice. My infirmity was worked upon to my ruin by spies whom that woman placed about me. I will spare you a series of adventures worthy of Gil Blas. Your Revolution took place. I was forced to enter the Quinze-Vingts, where the woman placed me after keeping me two years in a mad-house, declaring that I was insane. I have never been able to kill her, for I could not see her, and I was too poor to buy another man's arm. If, before losing Benedetto Carpi, the jailer, I had inquired from him the exact position of my dungeon, I might have gone to Venice when the Republic was abolished by Napoleon and rediscovered the treasure vault— But now, hear me! in spite of my blindness, let us go to Venice! I can find the door of my dungeon; I can see gold through the thickest wall; I can feel it in the water under which it is sunk! The events which have overthrown the power of Venice are such that the secret

of this treasure must have died with Vendramino, Bianca's brother, a doge who, I always hoped, would have made my peace with the Ten. I wrote letters to the First Consul, I proposed a bargain to the Emperor of Austria, — they both treated me as a lunatic. Come ! let us go to Venice ! We shall start beggars and come back with millions ; I will recover my estates, and you shall be my heir ; you shall be Principe di Varese ! ”

Bewildered by this tale, which had all the magnitude of a poem to my imagination, and by the aspect of that white head against the black waters that surrounded the Bastille, — still waters like those of the canals of Venice, — I could not answer. Facino Cane thought, no doubt, that I judged him, as others did, with contemptuous pity ; he made a gesture eloquent with the whole philosophy of despair. His narrative had recalled to his mind the happy days of Venice ; he seized his clarionet and sadly played a Venetian air, a *barcarole* which revived his early gift, the musical gift of a patrician in love. It was, as it were, the *Super flumina Babylonis*. Tears filled my eyes. If some belated pedestrian had passed along the boulevard Bourdon he would have stopped to listen to this exile's prayer, this last regret for a lost name, with which was mingled the memory of Bianca. But gold recovered its ascendancy ; the fatal passion stamped out the gleam of youth and love.

“ I see that treasure everywhere,” he cried, “ at all times, waking or asleep ; I walk in the midst of it ; the diamonds sparkle. I am not so blind as you fancy ;

gold and diamonds illumine my night, — the night of the last Facino Cane, for my title passes to the Memmi. My God! the murderer's punishment began too soon! *Ave Maria* — ”

He recited a few prayers which I could not hear.

“ We will go to Venice,” I said, as he rose.

“ I have found my helper at last ! ” he cried, his face flaming. I led him back on my arm ; he pressed my hand at the gates of the Quinze-Vingts as some of the wedding-party passed noisily by us.

“ Shall we start to-morrow ? ” he said.

“ As soon as we get money enough.”

“ But we can go on foot ; we will beg our way, — I am robust, and gold, the sight of gold before me makes me young.”

Facino Cane died during that winter after a lingering illness of two months. The poor old man had taken cold.

G A M B A R A.

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THE first day of the year 1831 was drawing to a close; four o'clock was striking; crowds were in the Palais-Royal, and the restaurants were beginning to fill up. Just then a coupé stopped before the entrance, and a young man of distinguished bearing got out of it, — a foreigner, of course, or he would not have been attended by a chasseur with aristocratic plumes, nor would his panels have shown the quarterings which the heroes of July were still seeking. The stranger entered the Palais-Royal and followed the crowd under the arcades without seeming surprised at the slow progression to which the sauntering mass of people condemned him; he seemed to the manner born of the noble gait called ironically the “ambassador’s pace,” yet his air of dignity had something theatrical about it. Although his face was grave and handsome, his hat, beneath which a curling mass of black hair appeared, tipped a little too much to the right ear, betraying his gravity by a slightly rakish air. His careless half-closed eyes let fall occasional contemptuous glances among the crowd.

“There’s a handsome young man,” said one grisette to another, as they drew aside to let him pass.

“And he knows it well,” said her companion, who was ugly, aloud.

Having made one turn round the arcades, the young man looked alternately at his watch and at the sky, seemed to grow impatient, entered a tobacconist’s, lit a cigar, and stood for a moment before the glass to look at his apparel, which was rather more elaborate than the French laws of good taste allow. He arranged his collar and a black velvet waistcoat, over which one of those heavy gold chains made in Genoa was crossed and recrossed; then with a single motion he flung his velvet-lined cloak over his left shoulder, where it fell with perfect elegance, and resumed his walk, paying no attention to the inquisitive bourgeois glances which followed him. When the shop-windows began to light up and the evening grew really dark, he walked toward the open space of the Palais-Royal with the air of a man who fears recognition, keeping close to the side of the square as far as the fountain, so as to reach, under cover of the line of hackney-coaches, the entrance to the rue Froidmanteau, a dirty, dark, and disreputable street which the police tolerate near the healthful Palais-Royal, just as some Italian major-domo allows a negligent footman to leave the sweepings of an apartment in a corner of the staircase.

The young man hesitated. He had somewhat the air of a bourgeoisie in her Sunday clothes who fears to cross a gutter when swollen by the rain; yet the hour

was well chosen to satisfy some questionable fancy. Earlier in the day he could have been detected ; later, he might have been forestalled. To have allowed himself to be invited by a glance that encouraged though it did not allure ; to have followed a young and handsome woman for an hour, perhaps for a day ; to set her on a pinnacle in his mind and give a thousand flattering interpretations to her thoughtless act ; to find himself believing in sudden irresistible sympathies ; to imagine, under the flame of a passing excitement, the advent of an adventure in an age when romances are written because there exists no longer the slightest romance ; to have dreamed of balconies, guitars, stratagems and bolts, and the mantle of *Almaviva* ; to have written a poem in honor of the divinity, and, after all, to end before the door of an evil resort ; to find in the decorum of his *Rosina* a police precaution, — is surely a history, a delusion, through which many men have passed who nevertheless would never admit it. The most natural feelings of all are those we are reluctant to acknowledge ; chief among their number is personal conceit. When the lesson goes no further, a Parisian profits by it or forgets it, and the harm done is not great ; but it is not so with a foreigner, who begins to think he may pay too dear for his Parisian education.

The loungeur was a noble Milanese, banished from his country, where a few freaks of liberalism had led the Austrian government to suspect him. The Conte Andrea Marcosini had been received in Paris with that French social eagerness always shown to an amiable

nature and a high-sounding name, if accompanied by an income of two hundred thousand francs and a charming person. To such a man exile was nothing more than travelling for pleasure ; his property was merely sequestered, and his friends informed him that after a year or two he could return to his own country without risk. After rhyming *crudelli affami* with *i miei tiranni* in a dozen or more sonnets, after assisting with his money a number of the poorer Italian refugees, Conte Andrea, who for his misfortune was a poet, thought himself released from patriotic ideas. Since his arrival he had given himself up without reservation to the pleasures of all kinds which Paris offers gratis to whoever is rich enough to buy them. His talents and his beauty won him many a success with women, whom he loved collectively, as was natural to his age, but among whom he had as yet selected none. Moreover, in him the taste for such pleasures was subordinate to the love of music and of poetry, — gifts which he had cultivated from childhood, and in which success seemed to him more difficult and glorious than the triumphs of gallantry, since nature had spared him the difficulties which other men were expected to vanquish.

A complex nature, like so many others, he let himself be influenced by the charms of luxury (without which, in fact, he could not have lived), just as he held tenaciously to social distinctions which his political opinions rejected. Thus his theories as an artist, a thinker, and a poet were often in contradiction to his tastes, to his feelings, and to his habits as an opulent man of

leisure ; but he consoled himself for this inconsistency by observing it in many Parisians who are liberals from self-interest and aristocrats by nature.

He was therefore surprised and not a little uneasy to find himself on foot on the 31st of December, in the midst of a thaw, following the steps of a woman whose dress denoted extreme poverty, — a radical, long-standing, inveterate poverty, — though her beauty was no greater than that which he could see any night at the Bouffons, the opera, or in society, and she was certainly not as young as Madame de Manerville, with whom he had an appointment that very day, and who, in all probability, was then awaiting him. But there was something in the glance, half-tender, half-wild, rapid yet intense, which the woman's black eyes furtively darted upon him ; so many griefs, so many stifled delights ; she blushed with such fire when, coming out of a shop where she had stayed for some minutes, her eyes met those of Marcosini, who awaited her return ; there were, in short, so many instigations to curiosity that the count, seized by one of those furious temptations for which there is no word in any language, not even in that of license, followed in pursuit of the woman exactly as an old Parisian runs down a grisette. As he walked along, sometimes before and sometimes behind her, he examined the details of her person and dress, trying to dislodge the absurd and frenzied desire that had taken possession of his brain ; but he found in so doing a more delightful pleasure still. Sometimes, lowering her head, the woman threw him an

oblique glance like that of a goat tethered to the ground ; then, finding him still in pursuit, she hastened her steps as though to escape him. Nevertheless, when a crowd of carriages or persons brought Andrea beside her, the young noble saw her shrink from his look, but without showing any annoyance. These sure signs of repressed emotion spurred the unruly dreams which were running away with him, and he hastened after her to the rue Froidmanteau, where, after many windings, she abruptly disappeared, trusting that her pursuer, who was much astonished at the proceeding, had lost all trace of her. It was dark. Two women, highly rouged, who were drinking liqueurs in a grocery, saw the young woman and called to her. She stopped at the sill of the door, replied to their civility in a few gentle words, and continued her way. Andrea, who was close behind, saw her disappear in one of the dark alleys of the street, the name of which he did not know. The repulsive appearance of the house which the heroine of his romance now entered turned his stomach. Stepping back a few paces to examine its surroundings, he encountered a man with a villanous face, and asked him its character. The man rested one hand on a knotty stick, stuck the other on his thigh, and replied sarcastically in two words, " Droll dog ! " But catching full sight of the Italian under the street lamp, his face immediately assumed a wheedling expression.

" Ah, excuse me, monsieur," he said, changing his tone ; " there 's a restaurant in that house, a sort of table-d'hôte, where the cooking is horribly bad and

they put cheese in the soup. Perhaps that's what monsieur is looking for ; it is easy to see by his clothes that he is an Italian. If monsieur would like me to show him a better restaurant, my aunt lives close by, and she is very fond of foreigners — ”

Andrea drew his cloak up to his nose and rushed out of the street, driven by the disgust that overcame him for this filthy individual, whose clothing and gestures were in keeping with the wretched house which the unknown woman had entered. He returned with a sense of delight to the comforts and elegancies of his own apartment, and passed the evening with the Marquise d'Espard, endeavoring to wash out the pollution of the fancy that had taken such strong hold upon him. Nevertheless, after he went to bed, in the stillness of the night, the vision of the evening returned to him, clearer and more vivid than reality. His divinity walked before him ; as she crossed the street gutters she lifted her dress and showed a shapely leg ; her nervous hips quivered at every step. Andrea fancied that he tried to speak to her and dared not, — he, Marcocini, the Milanese noble ! Then, seeing her again as she entered the dark alley and the dilapidated house, he blamed himself for not following her farther. “ For,” he said to himself, “ if she avoided me and was trying to put me off the scent, she must love me. With women of her kind resistance is a proof of love. If I had pushed the adventure farther, I might have been disgusted, and able to sleep in peace.”

The count was in the habit of analyzing his keenest

sensations, as all men gifted with heads as well as hearts are involuntarily apt to do ; and he was greatly surprised to find himself thinking of the unknown woman not with the ideal glamour of a vision, but in all the nakedness of her miserable reality. And yet, could his fancy have stripped her of the livery of wretchedness, the woman herself would have been spoiled for him ; for he wanted her, he desired her ; he loved her with those muddy stockings, those broken shoes, and the battered straw bonnet ; he wanted her in that very house which he had seen her enter.

“ Am I in love with vice ? ” he asked himself, with horror. “ No, I have not come to that ; I am twenty-three years old ; I have nothing of the satiated old man about me.”

The very strength of the caprice of which he seemed to be the toy reassured him a little. This curious struggle, reflection on the one hand and love at a run on the other, may reasonably surprise those who are accustomed to the ways of Paris ; but they must bear in mind that the Conte Andrea Marcosini was not a Frenchman.

Brought up by two abbés who, by order of a pious father, rarely left him to himself, Andrea had not loved a cousin at eleven nor seduced his mother’s maid at twelve ; he had never frequented those colleges where the most consummate teaching is not that furnished by the State ; moreover, he had only been a short time in Paris, and was therefore open to those sudden and deep impressions against which the education and customs of Frenchmen are so powerful an ægis. In

Southern lands, great passions are born of a glance. A Gascon gentleman, who tempered his sensibility by much reflection, and possessed an array of little recipes against the sudden apoplexies of his head and heart, advised Marcosini one day to indulge in an orgy a month, so as to avert those storms of the soul which without such precautions were apt to burst forth inconveniently. Andrea recollected this advice, and said to himself, as he went to sleep, "Well, I'll begin to-morrow, January the 1st."

This explains why the Conte Andrea Marcosini was skirting so furtively the line of hackney-coaches to get to the entrance of the rue Froidmanteau. The man of elegance hampered the lover; he hesitated for some time, but after a last appeal to his courage the lover advanced with a tolerably firm step to the house which he had easily recognized. There he stopped again. Was that woman what he imagined her to be? Might he not be taking a false step? He recollected the Italian table-d'hôte, and eagerly seized a middle course which seemed to serve both his desires and his repugnance. He entered the premises intending to dine there, and slid along a dark passage, at the end of which he found, after feeling about for some time, the damp and greasy steps of a stairway which to an Italian nobleman must have seemed a sort of ladder. Attracted to the second floor by a small lighted lamp placed on the ground, and by a strong smell of cooking, he pushed the half-open door and saw a large room dingy with smoke and grease, where a woman of all

work was laying the table for about twenty guests. None had arrived as yet. Glancing round the ill-lighted room, where the paper hung in strips from the walls, the nobleman sat down near a stove which smoked and rumbled in a corner. The master of the premises, attracted by the noise which the count made on entering, now came abruptly into the room. Imagine a thin, lank cook, very tall, endowed with an immeasurable nose, casting about him from time to time with feverish excitement a glance that was intended to seem cautious. At sight of Marcosini, whose dress and appearance denoted wealth, Signor Giardini bowed respectfully. The count expressed a desire to dine there habitually with his compatriots, and to buy a certain number of dinner-tickets in advance, giving a friendly tone to the conversation so as to lead the more readily to his real object. No sooner had he alluded to his unknown attraction, than Signor Giardini made a grotesque gesture, looked at his customer with a roguish eye, and let a smile curl his lip.

“*Basta!*” he cried; “*capisco!* Vossignoria is brought here by two appetites. The Signora Gambara has n’t wasted her time if she has managed to interest so generous a nobleman as you appear to be. I’ll tell you in a word all that we know here about the poor woman, who is truly to be pitied. The husband was born, I think, at Cremona, but he is lately come from Germany; he tried to introduce a new kind of music and new instruments among those *Tedeschi*. Pitiable!” exclaimed Giardini, shrugging his shoulders. “Signor

Gambara, who fancies he is a great composer, does n't seem to me particularly great in anything else. A fine fellow, though, full of good sense and witty, sometimes good-natured, especially when he has drunk a glass or two of good wine, — rare event, by reason of his horrid poverty. He busies himself day and night in composing imaginary operas and symphonies instead of working for a living as he ought to do. His poor wife is reduced to sewing for all sorts of people, riff-raff! Well, it can't be helped; she loves her husband like a father, and cares for him like a baby. A great many young men come and dine here in hopes of courting madame, but not one has ever succeeded," he continued, with an emphasis on the last word. "The Signora Marianna is virtuous, my dear sir, too virtuous for her own good. The poor woman will die in poverty. You'd suppose her husband would reward her for such devotion, would n't you? Bah! he does n't even give her a smile. Their cooking is done at the bakery, for that devil of a man not only does n't earn a penny, but he spends all his wife's earnings in making instruments, which he cuts and fits and lengthens and shortens and sets up and takes to pieces till they give out squeaks that make the cats run away; then he is happy. Yet you'll find him the gentlest and kindest of men, and not a bit lazy; no, he is always at work. To tell you the truth, he's *mad* and does n't know it. I've seen him filing and forging those instruments of his, and eating black bread with an appetite I actually envied, — yes, I, monsieur, who keep the best table in Paris. Eccellenza,

before an hour passes over your head you shall know the man I am. I have introduced into Italian cookery refinements and delicacies that will astonish you. Eccellenza, I am Neapolitan, that is to say, a born cook. But what good is instinct without science? Science! have I not spent thirty years in acquiring it? and see to what it has brought me! My history is that of all men of genius. My experiments, my inventions, have ruined three restaurants, — one at Naples, the others at Rome and Parma. Now that I am again reduced, here in this city, to make a trade of my art, I indulge my dominant passion more than ever. I serve the ragouts of my fancy to these poor refugees. I ruin myself. Folly! do you say folly? I know it, but how can I help it? Genius is stronger than I; can I restrain myself from the concoction of a dish that woos me? They know it at once, the fine fellows! I swear to you they can tell at once whether it was my wife or I who handled the saucepans. Well, what's the result? Out of the sixty and more guests I had around this table at the time when I first opened this miserable restaurant, barely twenty remain, and most of those I take on credit. The Piedmontese and the Savoyards have all disappeared; only persons of real taste, the true Italians, remain. And for them what sacrifices would I not make? I often give them a dinner for twenty-five sous a head which costs me double."

Signor Giardini's little speech was so redolent of artless Neapolitan knavery that the count was delighted, and fancied himself back at Gerolamo.

“If that is the case, my dear host,” he said familiarly, “and since accident and your good-will have let me into the secret of your daily sacrifices, permit me to double the sum I pay you.”

So saying, Andrea threw down a forty-franc piece, out of which Signor Giardini scrupulously returned him two francs fifty centimes, with various discreet becks and winks which enchanted the young man.

“In a few minutes,” resumed Giardini, “you shall see your *donnina*. I’ll place you at table next to the husband; and if you wish to get into his good graces, talk music: I have invited them both, poor souls! In honor of New Year’s day I have prepared a dish for my guests in which, I may say, I have surpassed myself.”

His words were drowned by the noisy greetings of the said guests, who came in one by one, or two and two, irregularly, after the fashion of table-d’hôtes. Giardini remained ostentatiously beside the count, pointing out to him the regular customers. He expended himself in quips and quirks, trying to bring a smile to the lips of a man whom his Neapolitan instinct pointed out to him as a rich patron to be plucked.

“That man,” he said, “is a poor composer who would like to get out of ballads and into opera; but he can’t. He complains of managers, and music-dealers, and everybody else except himself, though certainly he’s his own worst enemy. Don’t you see what a florid skin he has, what beaming satisfaction in himself, how little strain or effort in his features? He’s cut out for a ballad-maker and nothing else. And that other man

with him, who looks like a match-seller, he is one of the greatest musical celebrities, Gigelmi, — the finest known leader of Italian orchestra. But he's deaf, and his life is ending unhappily, deprived of all that was attractive to him. Oh, here comes our great Ottoboni, the most artless old fellow this earth ever produced; but he is suspected of conspiring for the regeneration of Italy. I should like to know why they ever banished such a mild old gentleman — ”

Here Giardini glanced at the count, who, aware that he was being sounded politically, maintained an immovable aspect that was truly Italian.

“ A man who has to cook for the world at large must deny himself political opinions, Eccellenza,” continued the culinary genius. “ But everybody who sees that worthy man, who looks, you observe, more like a sheep than a lion, would say just what I think about him to the Austrian ambassador himself. Besides, these are days when liberty is no longer hunted down; her turn has come! The worthy folks here present think so, at any rate,” he whispered in the count's ear, “ and why should I contradict their hopes, though I, myself, don't hate absolutism? All great talent is arbitrary. Well, though Ottoboni has genius, he spends his time and pains on teaching Italy; he writes little books to enlighten the minds of children and the laboring classes, and he is very clever in getting them smuggled into Italy; he takes every means to awaken a moral sense in our poor native land, where they prefer enjoyment to liberty, — and maybe they are right.”

The count maintained his impassible manner, and the cook discovered none of his political opinions.

"Ottoboni," resumed Giardini, "is a saintly man; he is very benevolent and helpful; all the refugees love him, for you know, Eccellenza, that a liberal may have virtues. Ah! here's a journalist!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself, and pointing to a man who wore the clothes conventionally attributed to a poet in a garret, for his coat was threadbare, his boots cracked, his hat greasy, and his overcoat in a condition of melancholy decay. "Eccellenza, that poor man is full of talent and incorruptible! He mistakes the age; he tells truth to everybody; people can't endure him. He is the dramatic critic of two paltry newspapers, though he knows enough to write for the great journals. Poor man! The others are hardly worth your notice; Vossignoria will readily understand them without my help," he added hastily, perceiving that the count no longer listened to him, as the wife of the composer entered the room.

Seeing Andrea, Signora Marianna trembled, and blushed a rosy red.

"Here he is," said Giardini in a low voice, pressing the count's arm as he showed him a man of tall stature. "See how pale and grave he is, poor man! Evidently the hobby has n't trotted to his liking to-day."

Andrea's love-dream was suddenly invaded by the overpowering charm which Gambara's presence exercised over every true art-lover. The composer had reached his fortieth year; but although his broad forehead, from which the hair had disappeared, was furrowed

with a few parallel lines, and in spite of the hollow temples where blue veins threaded the transparent texture of the smooth skin, in spite, too, of the sunken orbits of the dark eyes surmounted by heavy lids and light-colored lashes, the lower part of his face with its tranquil lips and soft outline gave him all the appearance of continuous youth. At a first glance an observer would have known that here was a man in whom intellect had smothered passion, and who would grow old from the effects of mental struggle only. Andrea cast a rapid glance at Marianna, who was watching him. The sight of her glorious Italian head with its true proportions and splendid coloring, bespeaking an organization where all the human forces were symmetrically balanced, made him aware of the depths which separated these two beings, conjoined by accident. Pleased with this evidence of unlikeness in the pair, he no longer combated the feeling which drew him to Marianna. But for the man whose sole blessing she was he already felt a sort of respectful pity, perceiving, as he did, the calm and honorable grief which Gambara's melancholy eyes made known to him. Expecting, from Giardini's description, to meet one of those grotesque beings so often put forward by German tale-tellers and libretto poets, he found to his amazement a simple, reserved man, whose manners and conduct, free from all eccentricity, were not without a nobleness of their own. The musician's dress, though it bore no trace of luxury, was more seemly than his extreme poverty appeared to warrant, and his linen witnessed to the tender care

that watched over even the minor details of his life. Andrea lifted his moist eyes to Marianna, who did not blush, though a half-smile flickered on her lips, called forth, perhaps, by the pride she felt in the young man's mute homage. Too seriously charmed not to watch for the slightest indication of return feeling, the count fancied himself beloved on seeing that she comprehended him. From that moment he devoted himself to the conquest of the husband rather than that of the wife, directing all his batteries against poor Gambara, who, suspecting nothing, ate the *bocconi* of Signor Giardini without even tasting them. The count opened the conversation with some general remark; but from the first he was conscious that the man's intellect, blind possibly on one point, was extraordinarily clear-sighted on all others, and he saw plainly that instead of merely flattering the notions of this remarkable man, he would do well to try to understand his ideas. The guests, a hungry crew, whose wit was sharpened at the prospect of a dinner, were it good or bad, betrayed a positive hostility to poor Gambara, and only waited the end of the first course to make him the butt of their ridicule. One of the refugees, whose glances in Marianna's direction revealed certain ambitious projects and a conviction that he stood well in the graces of the beautiful Italian, opened fire by attempting to explain to Marcosini the manners and customs of the table-d'hôte, and thus indirectly throw ridicule on the husband.

“It is some time now since we heard anything about the opera of ‘Mohammed,’” he exclaimed, smiling at

Marianna. "Can it be that Paolo Gambara is given over to domestic cares, and the charms of the pot-au-feu, and neglects his superhuman talent, allowing his genius to get cold and his imagination chilly?"

Gambara knew all the guests; he felt that he lived in a sphere above them, and he no longer took the trouble to repel their attacks: he did not answer.

"It is not the privilege of the world at large," put in the journalist, "to have sufficient intellect to understand the musical lucubrations of Monsieur Gambara; and that is doubtless the reason why our divine *maestro* does not produce his works for the benefit of these excellent Parisians."

"And yet," remarked the composer of ballads, who so far had only opened his mouth to put into it all the food that was offered to him, "I know men of talent who think a good deal of the judgment of Parisians. I have some reputation as a musician," he added modestly; "I owe it merely to my little vaudeville melodies and to the great success of my quadrille music at evening parties; but I fully expect soon to present to the world a mass composed for the anniversary of the death of Beethoven, and I believe I shall be better understood in Paris than elsewhere. Will monsieur do me the honor to come and hear it?" he said, addressing Andrea.

"Thank you," replied the count, "I am not endowed with the organs necessary for the appreciation of French songs; but if you were dead, monsieur, and Beethoven had written your mass, I should certainly not miss hearing it."

This reply put an end to the skirmishing of the enemy, who were trying to start Gambara on the track of his crotchets, for the purpose of amusing the new-comer. Already it was repugnant to Andrea's feelings to see so noble and gentle a madness, if madness it were, at the mercy of all these commonplace reasoners. He carried on, therefore, by fits and starts, a conversation with the artist, in the course of which Giardini's nose was several times interposed between two replies. When Gambara gave expression to paradoxical ideas, or uttered some social witticism, the cook would thrust forward his head, throw a look of pity on the musician, and a knowing look at the count, in whose ear he whispered : —

“ *È matto !* ”

Presently, however, the exigencies of the second course, to which he attached extreme importance, interrupted the sapient observations of the cook. During his absence, which lasted only a short time, Gambara leaned towards Andrea and said in his ear : —

“ That worthy Giardini threatens us to-day with a dish of his own concoction, which I advise you to avoid, though his wife has overlooked its preparation. The honest fellow has a mania for innovations in cookery. He has ruined himself in experiments; the last of which forced him to leave Rome without a passport, — a circumstance he never tells. After buying the goodwill of a famous restaurant, he was engaged to supply a supper given by a newly-appointed cardinal who had not yet set up his own establishment. Giardini thought

the occasion had come to distinguish himself; he succeeded! That very night he was accused of poisoning the whole conclave, and he was forced to leave Rome and Italy without packing his trunks. That misfortune upset his remaining wits, and now — ”

Gambara laid his forefinger on the middle of his forehead and shook his head.

“ In other respects,” he added, “ he is a worthy man. My wife can tell you that we are under many obligations to him.”

Giardini reappeared, carrying with much precaution a dish which he deposited in the middle of the table; then he modestly came and seated himself beside Andrea, who was helped first. No sooner had the count tasted the famous viand than he felt there was an insurmountable barrier between the first and second mouthful. His embarrassment was great; for he was anxious not to displease the cook, who had his eye upon him. Though a French restaurateur may care little whether his customers despise the dishes they are sure to pay for, it is quite otherwise with the Italian *trattore*, who is hardly satisfied with mere praise. To gain time, Andrea complimented Giardini warmly, and as he did so slipped a gold piece into his hand under the table, and whispered to him to go and buy some champagne, allowing him to take the credit of the liberality.

When the cook reappeared, all the plates were empty, and the room resounded with praises for the provider of the feast. The champagne soon enlivened the Italian tongues, and the conversation, till then restrained by the

presence of a stranger, now jumped the barriers of suspicious reserve and spread itself here and there over the broad fields of artistic and political theory. Andrea, who was given to no intoxications but those of love and poetry, soon made himself master of the attention of those present, and led the discussion cleverly to musical matters.

“Will you kindly tell me,” he said to the maker of dance-music, “how it is that the Napoleon of petty tunes can lower himself to a struggle with such people as Palestrina, Pergolese, Mozart, — poor fellows who will have to depart bag and baggage on the advent of this stupendous requiem?”

“Monsieur,” replied the composer, “a musician finds it difficult to reply when his reply needs the co-operation of a hundred able performers. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, without an orchestra, would have been no great things.”

“No great things!” exclaimed the count. “Why, the whole world knows that the immortal composer of ‘Don Giovanni’ and the ‘Requiem’ was named Mozart; but I am, unfortunately, ignorant of what the fertile inventor of fashionable country-dances calls himself.”

“Music exists independently of its execution,” said the orchestra leader, who, in spite of his deafness, had caught a few words of the discussion. “Take the c minor symphony of Beethoven, — a musical mind is borne into the world of Fancy on the golden wings of that theme in G, repeated in E by the cornets; it sees a whole nature in turn illuminated by dazzling jets of

light, darkened by clouds of melancholy, inspirited by divine songs."

"Beethoven is surpassed by the new school," said the song-composer, disdainfully.

"He is not yet understood," said the count; "how then can he be surpassed?"

Here Gambara drank a full glass of champagne, and accompanied the libation with an approving smile.

"Beethoven," continued the count, "has set forward the limits of instrumental music, and no one has yet followed him along the way."

Gambara denied this by a shake of his head.

"His works are especially remarkable for the simplicity of their plan, and for the manner in which that plan is followed," said the count. "In the works of most composers the orchestral parts are random and disorderly; they blend only to produce a momentary effect; they do not carry forward the harmony of the whole by the regularity of their own movement. Now, in Beethoven the effects are, if I may say so, distributed in advance. Just as various regiments assist by regular movements in gaining a battle, so the different orchestral scores in the symphonies of Beethoven obey orders given for the general interest, and are subordinated to plans judiciously conceived. In this respect there is a marked likeness between Beethoven and a genius of another order. We often find in the noble historical romances of Walter Scott that the personage who stands most aloof from the action of the tale is brought at a given moment, by threads woven into the plot, to take part in its catastrophe."

“*E vero!*” said Gambara, whose common-sense seemed to return inversely to his sobriety.

Wishing to test the musician still further, Andrea abandoned for the time being his own sympathies and predilections, and began to attack the European reputation of Rossini. He brought those charges against the Italian school which for the last thirty years it has refuted nightly in a hundred theatres. He soon found he had his hands full. At the first words he uttered, a low murmur of disapprobation rose about him; but neither interruptions, nor exclamations, nor frowns, nor pitying looks, were able now to stop the fanatical admirer of Beethoven.

“Compare,” he said, “the productions of the great composer with what it is the fashion to call Italian music; what crudity of thought, what viciousness of style! Hear those uniform measures, the triteness of the cadences, the never-ending *florituri* flung out haphazard no matter what the occasion, that monotonous crescendo which Rossini brought into vogue and which to-day is an essential part of musical composition, and last not least those bird-like trills, — all signs of a chattering, pattering, scented music which has no merit other than the fluency of the singer and the agility of the vocalization may give it! The Italian school has lost sight of the highest mission of art. Instead of lifting the world to itself, it has lowered itself to the world; it has won its fame by seeking the suffrages of the many, appealing to common tastes which are ever in the majority. Its fame is that of the street corners. The

compositions of Rossini, in which this sort of music is embodied, as well as those of the masters who derive more or less from him, seem to me only worthy of gathering a crowd in the streets round a Barbary organ, or keeping time to the skips of Pulcinella. I prefer French music to that; I couldn't say more! No, all hail to German music—whenever it learns to sing,” he added in a low voice.

This sally was only the summing up of a long argument in which Andrea soared for a quarter of an hour in the higher regions of metaphysics with the ease of a somnabulist on the ridge of a roof. Keenly interested in such subtleties, Gambara did not lose a single word of the discussion; he took it up the moment Andrea ceased to speak, and the attention of the guests was arrested at once; even those who were in the act of leaving the room, remained to listen.

“You attack the Italian school very vehemently,” said Gambara, enlivened by the champagne; “but that’s a matter of indifference to me. Thank God, I am beyond all those frivolities that are more or less melodious. But for a man of the world you show little gratitude for the classic land from which Germany and France derived their first lessons. While the compositions of Carissimi, Cavalli, Scarlatti, Rossi, were listened to throughout the length and breadth of Italy, the violinists of the French opera had the singular privilege of playing their instruments with gloved hands. Lulli, who did so much to extend the domain of harmony, and was the first to give law to discords, could only

find, on his arrival in France, a cook and a mason who had voice and perception enough to execute his music. He made a tenor of the first and turned the other into a bass. In those days, Germans, excepting always Sebastian Bach, were ignorant of music. But, monsieur," added Gambara in the humble tone of a man who fears that his remarks will be received with contempt and perhaps ill-will, "though young, you must have studied the higher questions of musical art for a long time, or you could not state them so clearly."

These words brought a smile to the faces of that part of the audience who had not understood Andrea's definitions. Giardini, convinced that the count was only talking at random for a purpose, poked him warily, laughing in his sleeve at a hoax of which he was proud to fancy himself an accomplice.

"In all that you have said," resumed Gambara, "there is much that seems to me very sensible; but take care. Your argument, while it brands Italian sensualism, seems to incline toward German idealism, which is a not less fatal heresy. If men of imagination and good sense, like yourself, desert one camp merely to pass into the other, if they cannot remain neutral between the two extremes, we must submit forever to the sarcasm of those sophists who deny progress and compare human genius to — to this tablecloth, which, being too short to fully cover Signor Giardini's table, hangs down at one end at the expense of the other."

Giardini bounded in his chair as if a hornet had

stung him; but hasty reflection recalled him to the dignity of an amphitryon; he raised his eyes to heaven and again poked the count, who began to think his host more crazy than Gambara. The serious and even religious manner in which the latter spoke of art interested Marcosini beyond measure. Sitting between these two crazes, one so noble the other so vulgar, each deriding the other to the vast entertainment of the herd about them, the count felt for a moment as though he were tossed about from the sublime to the ridiculous, — the two extravaganzas of the comedy of human life. Suddenly breaking the chain of the extraordinary transitions which had led him into this smoky den, he fancied himself the victim of some strange hallucination, and began to consider Gambara and Giardini as two abstractions.

Presently, after a final buffoonery on the part of the leader of the orchestra directed at Gambara, the guests retired amid roars of laughter; Giardini went off to make the coffee he wished to offer to his distinguished patron; and his wife cleared the table. The count, sitting next to the stove between Marianna and Gambara, was precisely in the situation that the latter had declared to be so desirable, — midway between sensualism on the one hand and idealism on the other. Gambara, meeting for the first time a man who did not laugh in his face, abandoned generalities and began to talk of himself, his life, his toils, his hopes of musical redemption, of which he thought himself the Messiah.

*“‘Hear me,’ he said, ‘you who have, so far, not scoffed
at me ; let me tell you my life.’”*



Donnerstag

Donnerstag

Donnerstag

“Hear me,” he said, “you who have, so far, not scoffed at me ; let me tell you my life, — not that I may parade a constancy which does not proceed from my own self, but for the glory of One who has put his force within me. You seem to be good and reverential ; if you cannot believe in me, at least you will pity me : pity is of man, faith comes from God.”

Andrea, coloring high, drew back a foot which was nearing that of Marianna, and fixed his attention upon her while he listened to her husband.

“I was born at Cremona,” resumed Gambara, “the son of a musical instrument maker ; a rather good performer, but a far better composer. I therefore learned in my childhood the laws of musical construction in its dual aspect, spiritual and material, and, with the curiosity of my years, I made observations which later were put to use in the mind of my matured manhood. The French invasion drove us, my father and me, from our home. We were ruined by the war. From the time I was ten years of age I began that wandering life to which all men who revolve in their heads reforms in art, science, or politics are subjected. Fate, or the natural disposition of their minds (which never square with the lines of ordinary minds), leads them forward providentially to points where they receive illumination. Led by my passion for music I went from theatre to theatre throughout Italy, living on little, as one can live there. Sometimes I played the cello in orchestras ; often I went upon the boards in choruses, or to the wings with the mechanics. Thus I studied music in all its aspects ;

I followed instruments and the human voice and asked myself wherein they differed and in what they harmonized ; listening carefully to the scores and applying the laws my father taught me. Often I travelled through the country mending instruments. It was a life without food in a land where the sun ever shone, where art is everywhere and money nowhere — at least for the artist, since Rome is no longer, except in name, the sovereign of the Christian world. Sometimes I was well received, sometimes I was driven away because of my poverty ; yet I never lost heart ; I listened to inward voices which foretold fame. Music seemed to me in its infancy. That opinion I still retain. All that remains to us of the musical world anterior to the seventeenth century goes to prove that ancient composers knew melody only, they were ignorant of harmony and its vast resources. Music is both a science and an art. The roots which it sends into physics and mathematics make it a science ; it becomes an art by inspiration, which employs, unknown to itself, the propositions of science. It derives from the physical by the very essence of the substance it employs. Sound is air modified ; air is made up of elements, which no doubt find within us analogous elements which respond to them, which sympathize with and augment them, by the power of thought. Thus air must certainly contain as many particles of varying elasticity, capable of as many vibrations of different length, as there are tones in reverberating bodies ; and these particles, perceived by our ear and put into operation by the musician, answer

to ideas according to our several organizations. In my opinion the nature of sound is identical with that of light. Sound is light under another form ; both act by vibrations which end in man, and which he then transforms in his nerve-centres into thoughts. Music is like painting, which employs bodies that have the faculty of disengaging this or that property of the mother-substance for the composition of a picture. So in music, instruments fulfil the function of a painter's color. Inasmuch as all sound produced by a reverberating body is invariably accompanied by its major third and fifth, and influences grains of dust spread upon a flat parchment so as to trace geometrical figures of uniform shapes upon it, according to the varying volumes of the sound, regular when harmony is given forth, and without exact form when discords are produced, I say that music is an art woven from the very bowels of Nature."

Gambara's calm eyes rested on Marcosini, who listened to him with rapt attention.

"Yes," he continued, "music obeys both physical and mathematical laws. The physical laws are little known, the mathematical laws are better known and understood ; the study of their action and influence led to the creation of harmony, to which we owe Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Rossini, men of glorious genius who have certainly produced a music that is nearer perfection than their predecessors, — though the genius of the latter is incontestable. The old masters sang their music instead of modelling it on art and science,

— a glorious alliance which blends into one whole the beauties of melody and the powers of harmony. Now if the discovery of the mathematical laws of music gave these four great musicians to humanity, to what height may we not attain when we succeed in discovering the physical laws in virtue of which (I beg you to observe this) we store up in great or lesser quantity, according to proportions yet to be discovered, a certain ethereal substance diffused upon the air, which gives us music as it gives us light, and the phenomena of vegetation as well as those of zoölogy. Do you understand me? These new laws provide the composer with new powers ; offering him instruments superior to all present instruments and, possibly, a finer harmony than that which rules the realm of music at the present day. If each modulated tone obeys a power, we must know what that power is in order that we may couple these forces according to their appropriate laws. Composers are now working on substances that are unknown to them. Why should an instrument of metal and an instrument of wood, the bassoon and the cornet, resemble each other so little in their effects, though they are worked by the same substances, that is to say, by the constituent gases of the atmosphere. Their dissimilarities come either from some decomposition of those gases, or from the assimilation of principles which are suited to them and which they send back modified by the power of faculties yet unknown to us. If we could discover what those faculties are, science and art would gain immensely. Whatever extends science extends art.

“ Well ! ” he cried, after a momentary pause, “ those discoveries ! I have tracked them, I have made them ! Yes ” he continued, growing more and more animated, “ until now man has noted effects rather than causes. If he could penetrate causes music would become the greatest of all the arts. In painting you see only what pictures show you ; you hear only what the poet tells you ; music goes far beyond that, — it forms your thought, it awakens your torpid memory. Behold a thousand souls present in one assembly ; notes issue from Pasta’s throat (rendering so well the thoughts that shone in Rossini’s soul when he wrote the melody) and that single phrase of the master transmitted into those diverse souls develops in them as many diverse poems. To one it shows a woman long desired ; to another some shore where once he paced, whose drooping willows and transparent water reappear to him with the hopes that danced beneath the bosky coverts ; this woman recalls the throng of feelings that tortured her in an hour of jealousy ; another, the unsatisfied longings of her heart, painting to her mind with the rich colors of a dream the ideal being whom she would fain embrace with the ardor of her who caresses her chimera in the Roman mosaic ; another thinks of desires about to be realized, and plunges by anticipation into a torrent of delights whose waves bound up and break upon her burning breast. Music alone has power to make us live within ourselves ; all other arts give limited pleasures only — But I am wandering too far. Such, then, were my first ideas, — vague indeed, for an inventor

sees at first only a faint aurora. But I carried these glorious ideas at the bottom of my wallet wherever I went; they helped me to eat the dry crusts gayly as I soaked them in the water of the wayside fountains. I worked, I composed melodies, and when I had played them on some instrument, no matter what, I resumed my travels through Italy. At last, when I was twenty-two, I went to live in Venice, where for the first time I found tranquillity and gained a tolerable position. I made the acquaintance of an old Venetian noble, who was pleased with my ideas, encouraged me in my researches, and found me employment at the Fenice theatre. Life in Venice is very cheap; and lodgings cost but little. I occupied an apartment in that Palazzo Capello whence the beauteous Bianca issued one night to become Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Queen of Cyprus. I dreamed that my hidden fame would issue thence and crown me, like her, in coming days. I spent my evenings at the theatre and my days in work. A disaster overtook me. The representation of an opera, 'The Martyrs,' in which I had embodied my ideas, was a failure. No one understood my music. Give Beethoven to Italians and they know not where they are. No one had the patience to await an effect which all the different themes of each instrument were preparing, until they gathered into one grand harmony. I had founded hopes on that opera of 'The Martyrs,' — for we always discount success, we lovers of the azure goddess Hope! When a man believes he is destined to produce great things, it is difficult not to have pre-

sentiments of success ; the cask has chinks through which the light will enter. In the same palazzo lived my wife's family ; and the hope of winning Marianna's hand, when she smiled upon me from her window, had greatly contributed to my efforts. I fell into a state of dark melancholy as I measured the depth of the abyss into which I had fallen ; I saw there was nothing before me but a life of poverty, — a ceaseless struggle in which love must perish. Marianna did as genius does ; she sprang with joined feet over and beyond all difficulties. I will not speak of the slender happiness that brightened the early days of my misfortunes. Terrified at my downfall, I believed that Italy, dull of comprehension and slumbering to the chorus of routine, was not prepared to receive the innovations I was meditating ; my thoughts turned to Germany. As I travelled towards that country, taking my way through Hungary, I listened to the manifold voices of nature ; I endeavored to reproduce their sublime harmonies by the help of instruments which I made or modified for the purpose. These experiments required enormous outlays which soon absorbed our slender savings. And yet this was the happiest period of our lives ; I was appreciated in Germany. Nothing finer has come into my life. I know of nothing to compare with the tumultuous sensations that filled my being in presence of Marianna, whose beauty was then in all its glory and celestial power. Must I admit it? — I was happy. More than once during those hours of weakness my passion made me speak the language of terrestrial har-

monies. I composed at times a few of those melodies which resemble geometrical figures, and are so much prized in the world you live in. But as soon as I attained success, invincible obstacles were put in my way by my co-musicians, all faithless or incapable. I had heard of France as a country where innovations were welcomed, and I resolved to go there; my wife collected the means and we came to Paris. Up to that time no one had ever laughed in my face; but in this dreadful city I was forced to bear that cruel torture added to the sharp anguish of our miserable poverty. Compelled to lodge in this polluted quarter of the town, we have lived for the last few months on Marianna's toil; she sews for the unhappy prostitutes who tramp this neighborhood. Marianna tells me she is treated with deference and generosity by these poor women, which I attribute to the ascendancy of a virtue so pure that vice is compelled to respect it."

"Hope on," said Andrea. "Perhaps you have reached the end of your trials. My efforts shall be united to yours to bring your labors into the light of day; meantime allow a compatriot, an artist like yourself, to offer you in advance a part at least of your inevitable future gains."

"All that belongs to my material life is my wife's affair," answered Gambara; "she will decide whether we can accept without humiliation the assistance of an honorable man, such as you appear to be. For myself, who have been led to make you this over-long confidence, I must ask your permission to withdraw. A

melody beckons me ; it dances and darts before me, naked and shivering, like a beautiful girl without her garments. Adieu, I must go and clothe my mistress ; I leave my wife with you."

He hurried away like a man who blamed himself for wasting precious time ; Marianna, half-embarrassed, tried to follow him. Andrea dared not retain her, but Giardini came to the rescue.

" Signorina," he said, " did you not hear your husband tell you to settle matters with the signor count?"

Marianna sat down again, but without looking at Andrea, who hesitated to address her.

" The confidence Signor Gambara has placed in me," he said at last, in a tone of emotion, " may perhaps win me that of his wife. Will *la bella* Marianna consent to tell me the history of her own life?"

" My life?" answered Marianna, " my life is that of an ivy. As to the history of my heart, you must think me exempt from pride as well as devoid of modesty if you can ask me to tell it to you after what you have just heard."

" Of whom shall I ask it?" cried the count, whose passion was beginning to extinguish his wits.

" Of yourself," replied Marianna. " Either you have already comprehended me, or you never will. Ask yourself."

" I will ; but you must listen to me. I take your hand ; leave it in mine so long as I tell your story truthfully."

" Go on," said Marianna.

“The life of a woman begins with her first passion,” said Andrea. “My dear Marianna began to live on the day when she first saw Paolo Gambara; her nature needed a deep passion to give it joy; above all she needed some pathetic weakness to protect and sustain. The splendid female organization with which she is endowed is, perhaps, less drawn to love than to maternity. You sigh, Marianna; have I laid my finger on an open wound? You took upon yourself a noble part, protecting, as you do, a fine, distraught intellect. You said to yourself: ‘Paolo shall be my genius and I will be his reason; between us we shall become that being, well-nigh divine, that men call angel,—that sublime creature which enjoys and comprehends, while neither virtue nor wisdom stifles love.’ In the first transports of youth you heard the myriad voices of nature which your poet longed to reproduce. Enthusiasm filled your soul when Paolo spread before you those treasures of poetry as he vainly sought their equivalent in the sublime but limited language of his own art; you admired him as an ecstatic elation carried him far above you, for you liked to think that all that errant energy would sooner or later return to love. You knew nothing of the tyrannous and jealous empire which thought maintains over the brains that fall in love with it. Gambara was the slave, before he knew you, of that proud and vindictive mistress, against whom you have vainly struggled for him to this day. For one sole moment happiness opened before you. When Paolo fell from the heights where his mind continually

soared, he found reality (the reality of your love) so sweet that you may well have thought his madness would slumber forever in your arms. But music regained her prey. The dazzling illusion which carried you suddenly into the delights of mutual passion made the solitary path to which you then found yourself condemned only the more arid and darksome. From the story your husband has just told me, as from the striking contrast between your person and his, I divine the secret anguish of your life, the painful mysteries of this ill-assorted union in which you take the lot of suffering upon yourself. Marianna, though your conduct is ever heroic and your fortitude never deserts you in the performance of your cruel duties, perhaps in the silence of your solitary nights the heart which now is beating hard within your bosom may rise and murmur. Your worst torture is the worthiness of your husband; were he less noble, less pure, you might abandon him; but his virtues support yours; between your heroism and his you may well ask yourself which should be the last to give way. You are pursuing the real grandeur of your task while Paolo is pursuing his chimera. If the love of duty alone sustained and guided you, perhaps victory might seem easier to you; to kill your heart and carry your life into the region of abstractions might even suffice you; religion would absorb the rest; you would live by an idea, like those saintly women who extinguish at the foot of the altar all the instincts of their nature. But the charm of Paolo's person, the elevation of his soul, the rare and

affecting proofs which he gave you of his tenderness, have perpetually driven you from the ideal world where virtue tried to keep you; they have excited forces within you which are exhausted incessantly in your unequal struggle against the phantom of love. But the time has come when you deceive yourself no longer. Years of disillusion have stripped your patience from you; an angel would have lost it long ago. To-day your hope so long pursued is a shadow, not a substance. Madness so near allied to genius must ever be incurable on earth. Aware, at last, of this truth, you have thought of your youth — lost, or at least sacrificed; you have bitterly perceived the wrong done you by nature which gave you a father only where you sought a husband. You ask yourself whether you have not gone far beyond the duties of a wife in keeping yourself faithfully to a man who knows no wife but science. Marianna, leave me your hand; all that I have told you is true. You have cast your eyes about you but — you were in Paris, not in Italy where they know how to love —”

“Oh! let me end the tale,” cried Marianna, “I would rather say these things myself. I will be frank. I know I speak to my best friend. Yes, I was in Paris when all that you explain so clearly took place within me; but when I met you I was saved, for I had nowhere met the love I had dreamed of from my infancy. My dress and my abode withdrew me from the notice of men like you. The few young men I meet here are odious to me; they treat me with disrespect; they scoff

at my husband as a foolish dotard ; some basely court him only to betray him ; they all seek to separate me from him ; none of them understand the worship I have vowed to that soul which is so far away from us only because it is so near heaven, nor the love I feel for that friend, that brother whom I desire to serve — forever. You alone have understood the tie that binds me to him. Tell me that your interest in my Paolo is sincere, and without an object — ”

“ I accept your praise,” interrupted Andrea ; “ but do not go too far ; do not oblige me to contradict you. I love you, Marianna, as we love the glorious land where you and I were born ; I love you with all my soul and with all my strength ; but, before I offer you this love I desire to make myself worthy of obtaining yours. I will make a last effort to give you back the man you have loved from childhood and whom, perhaps, you will never cease to love. While awaiting success or defeat, accept, without a blush, the comforts of life which I desire to give to both of you. To-morrow let us seek a suitable lodging for him. Do you esteem me enough to allow me to share your guardianship ? ”

Marianna, astonished at his generosity, held out her hand ; the count took it, and then left the room, endeavoring to avoid the civilities of Signor Giardini and his wife.

The next day Andrea was ushered by Giardini into the apartment occupied by the husband and wife. Though Marianna well knew the superior nature of her lover (for there are souls that can be quickly read), she

was too good a housekeeper not to show some embarrassment on receiving a great lord in so poor a chamber. But it was very clean. She had passed the morning in dusting her extraordinary furniture, the handiwork of Giardini, who had spent his leisure hours in constructing it from the woodwork of instruments discarded by Gambara. Andrea had never seen anything so amazing in his life. To maintain the semblance of gravity, he was forced to turn his eyes away from the composer's bed, grotesquely fabricated by the cook out of the case of an old spinet, and look at Marianna's narrow couch, whose single mattress was covered with a piece of white muslin, a sight which filled him with thoughts both sad and tender. He wished to speak of his plans and to arrange for the employment of the morning; but the enthusiastic Gambara, believing that he had met with a willing auditor at last, seized upon the count and compelled him to listen to an opera which he had written for the Parisians.

"In the first place, monsieur," said Gambara, "allow me to tell you the subject in half a dozen words. Here, in Paris, persons who receive musical impressions never develop them within their own souls, as religion teaches us to develop sacred texts, by prayer and meditation; consequently, it is difficult to make them understand that there exists in nature an eternal music, a melody infinitely sweet, a perfect harmony, troubled only by fluctuations independent of the divine will, as passions are independent of the will of men. It was therefore necessary that I should find some vast canvas or frame

able to contain and to show effects and causes — for my music aims to present a picture of the life of nations taken at its highest point of view. My opera (of which I wrote the libretto, for a poet could never have developed the subject) gives the life of Mōhāmmēd, a personage in whom the magic of ancient Sabæanisms and the oriental poetry of the Jewish religion were brought together to produce one of the greatest of human poems, — the dominion of the Arabs. Undoubtedly, Mohammed borrowed the idea of absolute government from the Jews, and the progressive movement which created the brilliant empire of the caliphs from the pastoral or Sabæan religions. The prophet's destiny was imprinted on his very birth. His father was a Pagan and his mother a Jewess. Ah! my dear count, to be a great musician one must needs be very learned. Without education there is no such thing as local color, in fact, no ideas in music. The composer who sings to sing is an artisan, not an artist. This magnificent opera is the continuation of the great work I had already begun. My first opera was called 'The Martyrs;' I intend to write a third on 'Jerusalem Delivered.' You see, of course, the beauty of this triple composition and its manifold resources. The Martyrs, Mohammed, Jerusalem! The God of the Occident, the God of the Orient, and the struggle of their religions around a tomb. But let me not speak of my lost greatness! Listen to a summary of my opera.

"The first act," he continued, after a pause, "shows Mohammed an agent, living in the house of Khadijah,

a rich widow with whom his uncle placed him. He is amorous and ambitious. Driven from Mecca, he flies to Medina, and dates his era from the period of his flight (the Hegira). The second act presents Mohammed the prophet founding a religion militant. The third shows him satiated with all things; having exhausted life, he seeks to conceal his death that he may seem a god, — last effort of human pride! You shall now judge of my method of expressing by sounds a great fact which poetry can only render imperfectly by words.”

Gambara seated himself at the piano with a calm, collected air; his wife brought the voluminous sheets of the score, which, however, he did not open.

“The whole opera,” he said, “rests on a bass, as on a rich territory. Mohammed must therefore have a majestic bass voice, and his first wife, necessarily, a contralto. Khadijah was past youth; she was twenty years of age. Attention! the overture begins (c minor) with an andante (three-four time). Do you hear the sadness of the ambitious man whom love cannot satisfy? Through his plaints, by a transition to related time (E flat *allegro*, common-time), are heard the cries of the epileptic lover, his ravings, mingled with a few warlike sounds; for the all-powerful sabre of the caliphs is beginning to gleam before his eyes. The manifold beauties of the single wife give him the idea of that plurality of love which strikes us so forcibly in Don Giovanni. Hearing this theme do you not already foresee the paradise of Mohammed? But here (A flat,

major key, six-eight) is a *cantabile* fit to delight a soul rebellious to all musical emotions; Khadijah has comprehended Mohammed! Khadijah announces to the multitude the conferences of the prophet with the angel Gabriel (*maestoso sostenuto* in *r* minor). The magistrates and priests, power and religion, feeling themselves attacked by the reformer, as Socrates and Christ attacked the worn-out, expiring religions and powers, turn upon the prophet and drive him from Mecca (*strette* in *c* major). But now, listen! comes my glorious dominant (*G* common-time). Arabia hears her prophet, the horsemen gather (*G* major, *e* flat, *B* flat, *G* minor, still common-time). The avalanche of men augments. The false prophet practises on a tribe the deceptions he is soon to impose upon a world (*G*, *G*). He promises universal dominion to the Arabs; they believe him because he is inspired. The crescendo begins (with the same dominant). Listen to the flourish of trumpets (*c* major); brass instruments woven into the harmony, but detaching themselves from it to express the first triumphs of victory. Medina is conquered for the prophet and they march to Mecca (burst of martial music, still *c* major). The powers of the orchestra roll forth like a conflagration, the instruments all speak; do you hear those torrents of harmony? Suddenly the *tutti* is interrupted by a graceful theme (minor third). Hear the last melody of devoted love! The woman who sustains the great man dies, concealing her despair; she dies at the triumph of him in whom love had become too mighty to confine itself to one woman; she

adores him enough to sacrifice herself to the greatness which destroys her. Soul of fire! But now behold! the desert invades the world (c major again). The orchestral parts take up the score in a terrible fifth of the fundamental bass, which dies away, — Mohammed is satiated; he has tasted and exhausted all! But he chooses to die a God! Arabia adores him with prayer; here we fall back into my first sad strain, after the curtain rose (c minor). Do you not find in this music," said Gambara, ceasing to play, and turning round to the count, "in this vivid, jostling, melancholy, fantastic, and ever grand music, the expression of the life of an epileptic frantic after pleasure, unable to read or write, making his very defects the stepping-stones of his grandeur, transforming his faults and his misfortunes into triumphs? Have you not obtained from this overture — a mere sample of the opera — an idea of his seductive power over an eager and amorous people?"

The face of the maestro, from which Andrea endeavored to divine the meaning of the ideas he was uttering with an inspired voice, and which a chaotic medley of notes hindered his hearer from comprehending, at first austere and calm, grew more and more animated until at last it took a passionate expression which reacted upon Marianna and Giardini. Marianna, keenly affected by the passages in which she recognized her own position, could not hide the agitation of her face from Andrea. Gambara wiped his forehead and threw his glance with such force to the ceiling that his eyes seemed to pierce it and rise upward to the skies.

“You have seen the peristyle,” he said, “let us now enter the temple. The opera begins. **FIRST ACT:** Mohammed, alone, on the front of the scene, sings an air (F natural, common time), interrupted by a chorus of camel-drivers, who surround a well at the back of the stage (they break into the rhythm, six-eight). What majestic grief! it touches the hearts of the most frivolous of beings. Is it not the melody of repressed genius?”

To Andrea’s great astonishment (Marianna was accustomed to it) Gambara contracted his throat so violently that choking sounds broke forth, something like those of a growling watch-dog. A light froth whitened the composer’s lips and made Andrea shudder.

“His wife appears (A minor). Magnificent duct! In this piece I show that Mohammed possessed will, and his wife intellect. Khadijah announces that she is about to undertake a work which will bereave her of the love of her young husband. Mohammed desires to conquer the world; his wife divines his purpose; she seconds it by persuading the people of Mecca that her husband’s attacks of epilepsy are the result of his commerce with angels. Chorus of Mohammed’s first disciples, who throng to promise him their help (c sharp minor, *sotto voce*). Mohammed retires to speak with the Angel Gabriel (recitative in F major). His wife encourages the chorus (air, accompanied by chorus; gusts of voices sustain Khadijah’s grand and majestic song. A major). ABDALLAH, the father of Ayesbah, the only maiden whom Mohammed has found a virgin,

and whose name the prophet changed to ABU-BEKR (father of the virgin) comes forward with his daughter; their voices detach themselves from the chorus, taking up Khadijah's air and sustaining it (in counterpoint). Omar, father of Hafsa, another maiden whom Mohammed is to possess, follows the example of Abu-Bekr and approaches with his daughter to form a quintette. The virgin Ayesha is first soprano; Hafsa second soprano; Abu-Bekr bass, and Omar barytone. Mohammed re-enters, inspired. He sings his first bravura air, which begins the finale (E major); he promises the empire of the world to his first Believers. The prophet beholds the maidens, and by a soft transition (from B major to G major) he turns to amorous phrases. Ali, Mohammed's cousin, and Khâled, his greatest general, both tenors, appear and announce the persecution; the magistrates, soldiers, and magnates have banished the prophet (recitative). Mohammed invokes the Angel Gabriel (in C), declares that the angel is with him, and points to a pigeon circling above his head. The chorus of Believers answer in tones of devotion on a modulation in B major. The soldiers, magistrates, and magnates arrive (*tempo di marcia*, B major). Struggle between the two choruses (*strette* in E major). Mohammed (by a succession of diminished and descending sevenths) yields to the storm and takes to flight. The sombre and savage color of this finale is flecked by the themes of the three women, who predict Mohammed's triumph; these phrases will be found developed in the third act, where Mohammed is seen to enjoy the delights of grandeur."

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Tears came into Gambara's eyes, then, recovering from his momentary emotion, he cried out : —

“SECOND ACT: Behold religion instituted! Arabs guard the tent of their prophet, who confers with God (chorus in A minor). Mohammed shows himself (prayer in F). What brilliant and majestic harmony underlies this chant, in which, methinks, I have pushed back the limits of melody! Surely I was bound to express the marvels of that great uprising and outpouring of men who created a music, an architecture, a poetry, with customs, manners, and morals of their own. As you listen, are you not pacing beneath the arches of the Generalife and through the gateways of the Alhambra? The *florituri* of the melody paint the exquisite Moorish arabesques of the architecture, and the poesy of that warlike and gallant religion which was soon to meet in arms the gallant and warlike chivalry of the Christians. A few brass instruments sound the first notes of triumph (in broken cadence). The Arabs fall down and worship the prophet (E flat major). Khâled, Amrou, and Ali enter (*tempo di marcia*). The armies of the Faithful have taken the cities and conquered the three Arabias! Hear that sonorous recitative! Mohammed rewards his generals by giving them his women. — Here comes in,” remarked Gambara, in a rueful tone, “one of those ignoble ballets which cut the thread of the noblest musical tragedies. But Mohammed (B minor) redeems it by his grand prophecy, which that poor Monsieur de Voltaire describes in lines beginning : —

‘Arabia’s day has come at last.’

The Arab chorus breaks forth triumphant (*allegretto* six-eight). The clarions and the other wind instruments reappear with the tribes who flock to the standard. General gala, in which all voices take up the strain, one after the other, and Mohammed proclaims Polygamy. In the midst of these rejoicings the woman who has done so much for Mohammed stands forth alone in a glorious melody (B major). 'And I,' she asks, 'I, am I no longer loved?' 'We must part,' he answers. 'Thou art a woman, I am a prophet; I may have slaves, I can no longer have an equal.' Listen to this duet (G sharp minor). What conflicts of soul! The woman comprehends the grandeur to which her hands have raised him; she loves him enough to sacrifice herself for his glory, she adores him as a God, without judging him, without murmuring. Poor woman, the first dupe and the first victim! What a theme for the finale (B major)! Behold the darkness of that grief standing out upon the background of the acclamations of the Faithful and wedded to the tones of Mohammed, who flings away his wife as a useless instrument, and yet makes us see that he can never forget her. What triumphant rockets, what red lights of rippling joyous songs spring from the throats (first and second soprano) of Ayesbah and Hafsah, sustained by Ali and his wife and Omar and Abu-Bekr. Weep, weep, rejoice! Triumphs and tears! for such is life."

Marianna could not restrain her sobs. Andrea was so moved that his eyes grew moist. The Neapolitan, shaken by the magnetic current of ideas expressed in

the spasmodic tones of the composer's voice, was overcome with emotion like the others. Gambara turned, saw the group, and smiled.

"You understand me at last!" he cried.

No general led in triumph to the Capitol, amid the purple of his glory and the acclamations of a people, ever looked when the crown was placed upon his head as Gambara now looked. His face shone like that of a sainted martyr. They did not undeceive him. A dreadful smile flickered on Marianna's lips. The count was horror-stricken at such blind and artless insanity.

"THIRD ACT," said the happy composer, seating himself again at the piano: "*(andantino solo)* Mohammed unhappy in his harem, surrounded by women. Quartette of houris (in A major). What splendor! hear the songs of happy nightingales! Modulations (F sharp minor). The air is given on the dominant E and is then taken up in A major. Delights cluster visibly to the senses to produce a contrast to the gloomy finale of the first act. After the dances Mohammed rises and sings a grand bravura (F minor), regretting the single and devoted love of his first wife and avowing himself a victim to polygamy. Never did musician have such a theme. The orchestra and the chorus of women express the joys of houris, while Mohammed reverts to the melancholy in which the opera begins. Where is Beethoven?" cried Gambara; "where is that soul that could understand me in this mighty return of the opera upon itself. See how everything rests upon the bass; that is how Beethoven constructed his symphony in C.

But his heroic movement is purely instrumental, while mine is supported by a sextet of glorious human voices and by a chorus of Believers who guard the gate of the sacred dwelling. I have here gathered all the treasures of melody and harmony, vocal and orchestral. Listen to the utterance of all human existence, be it rich or be it poor: STRUGGLE, TRIUMPH, and SATIETY. Ali enters; the Koran is everywhere triumphant (duet in D minor). Mohammed places himself in the hands of his two fathers-in-law; he is weary of everything; he desires to abdicate and die secretly to consolidate his work into a religion. Magnificent sextet (B flat major)! He bids farewell (*solo* in F natural). The two fathers, appointed vicars (caliphs), call the people together. Grand triumphal march. Prayer of the Arabs kneeling before the sacred mansion (*Kasba*), whence a pigeon takes its flight (same key). This prayer, uttered by sixty voices and dominated by women (in B flat), crowns my stupendous work, in which the life of nations and of man has found expression. You have heard all emotions, human and divine."

Andrea gazed at Gambara in stupid amazement. If he had not been shocked by the horrible irony which the man presented as he pictured the feelings of the wife of Mohammed without perceiving the same feelings in Marianna, the madness of the husband might have seemed to him eclipsed by the madness of the composer. There was no semblance of musical or poetical ideas in the deafening cacophony which afflicted his ears; the principles of harmony, the first rules of composition,

were absolutely wanting in this formless creation. Instead of a music scientifically wrought out, such as Gambara described, his fingers produced a succession of fifths, sevenths, and octaves, major thirds and processions of fourths without sixths in the bass,—a jumble of discordant sounds flung out at random as though combined to rend the ears of the least sensitive of hearers. It is difficult to express this extravagant piece of execution ; new words must be coined to give an idea of this impossible music.

Painfully affected by the madness of so fine a mind, Andrea colored and glanced furtively at Marianna, who sat with lowered eyes and pallid cheeks, unable to keep back her tears. In the midst of the hurly-burly of notes Gambara gave vent, now and then, to exclamations that revealed the rapture of his soul ; he grew faint with gladness, he smiled at his piano, then he frowned at it in anger and “dragged its tongue out” (to use an expression of the inspired) ; in short, he seemed intoxicated with the poetry that filled his heart and which he vainly sought to utter in his music. The harrowing discords which jangled beneath his fingers evidently resounded in his own ears like celestial harmonies. Beyond a doubt, the vision of his inspired blue eyes opened on another world ; the rosy glow that warmed his cheeks, above all, the divine serenity which inspiration cast upon his lofty features would have led a deaf man to suppose he was present at the improvisation of some great master. And the illusion would have been all the more perfect because the execution of this insensate

music required a marvellous facility in fingering, which Gambara must have practised for many years. His hands were not the only part of him employed; the intricacies of the pedals put his whole body in constant motion; perspiration streamed from his face as he labored to swell a crescendo by all the feeble means which a graceless piano lent him; he stamped, he snorted, he roared; his fingers darted with the rapidity of the forked tongue of a snake; finally, as the piano gave out its last howl, he threw himself backward and let fall his head on the back of the chair.

“*Per Bacco!* I am stunned, dizzy,” cried Andrea, escaping from the room. “A child jumping on the key-board would have made better music.”

“Of course!” said Giardini, following. “Chance could n’t manage to avoid the harmony of two notes as that devil of a fellow has done for the last hour.”

“How can Marianna’s features remain so regular?” muttered the count; “they must change under the perpetual hearing of those hideous discords. Marianna will grow ugly.”

“*Signor conte*, we must rescue her from such a danger!” cried Giardini.

“Yes,” said Andrea, “I am thinking of it. But, to make sure that my plans are not built on sand, I must test my ideas by an experiment. I shall return here to-morrow to examine the musical instruments he has invented, and at night we will have a little supper, — a *medianoche*. I’ll send the wine and the good things.”

The cook bowed low. The count spent the next day

in arranging an apartment for the poor household. At night he went back to the rue Froidmanteau and found the cakes and wine set out by Marianna and Giardini with a certain daintiness. Gambara showed him triumphantly a number of little drums, on which lay grains of powder, by the help of which he made observations on the different natures of the sounds emitted by his instruments.

“Do you see,” he said, “by what simple means I am able to prove a great proposition? In this way acoustics reveal actions analogous to sound on all the objects which sound affects. All harmonies start from a common centre and retain an intimate relation to each other; or rather, harmony, which is One, like light, is decomposed by our art as a ray is by a prism.”

Gambara proceeded to show Andrea the instruments constructed according to his laws, explaining the changes he had made in their form and fabric. He finally announced, not without solemnity, that he should crown this preliminary evening, which so far had only satisfied the curiosity of the eye, by letting all present hear an instrument which was able to fill the place of an entire orchestra, to which he had given the name of *panharmonicon*.

“If it is that thing in this cage which makes all the neighbors grumble,” said Giardini, “you won’t play long, for the police will be after you.”

“If that poor crazy creature stays here,” whispered Gambara in the count’s ear, “it will be impossible for me to play.”

The count got rid of the cook by promising him a reward if he would stay downstairs and prevent the neighbors and the patrol from interfering. Giardini, who had not spared the wine in his own behalf while pouring it out for Gambara, consented. The composer, though not intoxicated, was in that state where all the intellectual forces are highly excited, — where the walls of the room are luminous, the garret has no roof, and the soul flutters out into a world of spirits. Marianna uncovered, not without some trouble, an instrument about as large as a grand piano, with an additional upper key-board. This singular machine was also furnished with stops for various wind-instruments, and the sharp elbows of several tubes.

“Will you play to me, if you please, the prayer that you said was so fine, and which concludes your opera?” said the count.

To Andrea's great astonishment, and also to Marianna's, Gambara began with several chords of perfect harmony; and their astonishment was succeeded first by admiration mingled with surprise, then by a complete ecstasy in which they lost sense of the place and man. The effects of an orchestra could not have been finer than the tones of the wind instruments, which swelled like an organ and blended marvellously with the harmonious richness of the stringed instruments. But the imperfect state of this singular machine hindered the full development of the composer's thought, which was felt to be still grander. It is to be remarked that a certain perfection in works of art often prevents

the soul from lifting them to greater heights. The sketch wins the day against the finished picture in the judgment of those who are able to fill out the sketch by thought instead of seeing it completed. The purest and sweetest music that the count had ever heard rose beneath the fingers of Gambara like incense from an altar. The voice of the composer became youthful once more; far from injuring the rich melody, it explained, supported, directed it, as the quivering, yearning voice of a reader like Andrieux enlarges the meaning of some fine scene of Corneille or Racine by adding its own sympathetic poetry. This music, worthy of angels, revealed treasures in the vast opera which could never be comprehended so long as this man persisted in trying to explain them with his normal reason. Marianna and the count, divided between delight in the music and surprise at the strange instrument with a hundred voices, in which a stranger might fancy a choir of young girls were lying concealed, so like were its tones to those of the human voice, dared not interchange their thoughts either by word or look. Marianna's face was lighted by a glorious gleam of hope, which restored the splendor of her youth. This new birth of beauty, allied to the luminous apparition of her husband's genius, shaded with a tinge of sadness the delight that this mysterious hour gave the count.

"You are our good angel," Marianna said to him. "I am tempted to believe that you inspire him, for I, who never leave him, have never heard him express himself like that."

“Listen to Khadijah’s parting song,” cried Gambara, singing the cavatina which the night before he had called sublime, and which now made the lovers weep, so perfectly did it give expression to the highest self-devotion of love.

“Who inspired you with such music?” cried the count.

“The Spirit,” answered Gambara. “When he appears, all is flame about me. I see melodies face to face, beautiful and fresh, colored like the flowers. They sparkle, they echo, and I listen; but it needs an infinitude of time to reproduce them.”

“Play on,” said Marianna.

Gambara, who felt no fatigue, played without effort or extravagance. He executed the overture with such talent, and showed such new and undiscovered wealth in music, that the count, dazzled by what he heard, began to believe in a magic like that of Listz and Paganini, — the magic of an execution which can change the conditions of music and make it into a poetry which transcends all musical creations.

“Well, Eccellenza, can you cure him?” asked the cook, when Andrea at last came down.

“I shall soon know,” replied the count. “The man’s intellect has two windows: one, toward the world, is closed; the other opens into heaven. The first is music, the second is poetry. Until to-day he has stood obstinately before the closed window; we must lead him to the other. You were the first, Giardini, to put me on the track of this truth, when you told me that his mind was clearer after he had drunk a little wine.”

"Yes," said the cook; "and I guess your plan, Eccellenza."

"If it is not too late to make poetry ring in his ears to the harmonies of a glorious music, he must be put in a state to hear it and judge of it. Now it seems that to intoxicate him is the only way to bring this about. Will you help me to manage it, my dear fellow? — but won't it injure you?"

"What does Vossignoria mean by that?"

Andrea made no reply, but went off laughing at the perspicacity of the Neapolitan's crazy brain.

The next day Marcosini came to fetch Marianna and show her the apartment he had provided. She had spent the morning in preparing a simple but suitable dress, into which she put all her savings. The change might have dissipated the illusions of a sated man of the world, but the count's fancy had now become a passion. Stripped of her poetic poverty and transformed outwardly into an ordinary bourgeoisie, Marianna now made him dream of marriage; he gave her his hand as he placed her in a hackney-coach and imparted his projects. She smiled and approved, happy in finding him more generous, more disinterested, nobler than she had hoped. They reached the new apartment, where Andrea had sought to keep himself present to her mind by adding a few of those elegancies which beguile the hearts of the most virtuous women.

"I will not speak to you of my love until you despair of Paolo's sanity," he said to her as they returned to the rue Froidmanteau. "You shall be witness to the

sincerity of my efforts. If they succeed, perhaps I may not be able to endure the part of friend. If so, I shall flee from you, Marianna. I am conscious of sufficient courage to work for your happiness, but I may not have enough to look upon it."

"Do not say such things," said Marianna, hardly able to restrain her tears. "Has generosity its dangers also? What, must you leave me so soon?"

"Yes," said Andrea. "Seek your happiness without interruption from me."

If Giardini was to be believed, the healthful change of air and living was favorable to both husband and wife. Every evening, after drinking wine, Gambara seemed less absent-minded, talked more, and with more sedateness. He even proposed to read the newspapers. Andrea could not restrain a shudder every time he saw some unhopèd-for evidence of his success; but although these pangs revealed to him the strength of his love, they did not lead him to waver in his virtuous resolution. He came every evening to watch the progress of the singular cure, and to take part in conversations, grave or gay, in which he opposed Gambara's singular theories with clearness and moderation. He put to use the marvellous lucidity of the latter's mind, on all points that did not touch upon his madness, to make him perceive and admit principles in other branches of art which he meant to show him, later, were equally applicable to music. All went well so long as the fumes of wine excited the patient's brain; but so soon as he was

perfectly sober his reason disappeared and his mania revived. Nevertheless, in the main, Paolo allowed himself to be more easily roused by impressions from the outside, and his mind began to employ itself on a greater number of things about him. Andrea, who took an artist's interest in his semi-medical work, thought at last that it was time to attempt a master-stroke. He resolved to give a dinner at his own house, to which Giardini should be admitted (according to his fancy for not separating the sublime from the ridiculous), and he selected the day when "Robert le Diable," an opera he had already heard rehearsed, was given for the first time in public. After the second course, Gambara, semi-intoxicated, was laughing at his theories with ready grace, while Giardini declared that his culinary innovations were of the devil. Andrea had neglected no means to bring about this double miracle. Flasks of Orvieto and Montefiascone, precious wines brought with all the care that is needed for their safe transport, *Lachrymæ Christi*, and Giro, and other hot wines of *la cara patria*, soon brought these excitable brains to the double intoxication of the grape and memory. At dessert, the cook and the composer mutually and gayly abjured their errors; one hummed a melody of Rossini, the other piled confectionery on his plate and drenched it with maraschino, in honor of French cookery. The count took advantage of Gambara's happy frame of mind and carried him to the opera, whither he allowed himself to be taken with the gentleness of a lamb.

At the first notes of the introduction Gambara's ine-

briety seemed to vanish, giving place to the exaltation which brought at times into harmony his judgment and his imagination ; the habitual discord of which was, no doubt, the cause of his insanity. The dominant thought of the great musical drama appeared to him in all its dazzling simplicity, like a lightning flash breaking through the clouds of darkness in which he lived. To his now unsealed eyes the music seemed to mark the immense horizons of a world where he found himself for the first time ; though he recognized conditions already seen by him in dreams. He fancied he was transported to those slopes of his own dear country where *la bella Italia* begins, and which Napoleon so appropriately named the “glacis of the Alps.” As memory took him back to the days when his young and vigorous reason was not yet disturbed by the ecstasy of his too rich imagination, he listened in a reverential attitude, unwilling to utter a single word. The count refrained from interfering with the inward workings of that soul. Till past midnight Gambara sat so motionless that the audience might have taken him for what he was, — a drunken man. On the way home the count began to attack Meyerbeer’s masterpiece, for the purpose of rousing Gambara, who was now plunged in the torpid half-sleep of inebriation.

“What is there so magnetic in that incoherent composition that it can make a somnambulist of you?” said Andrea, when they reached the house. “The subject of ‘Robert le Diable’ is not without interest, I admit ; Holtei has developed it very happily in a well-written

drama full of strong and moving situations ; but the French authors have contrived to make it the most ridiculous fable in existence. No libretto absurdity of Vesari or Schikaneder ever equalled that of the opera of 'Robert le Diable,' — a dramatic nightmare, which oppresses the spectator without rousing him to any deep emotions. Meyerbeer's devil plays too good a part. Bertram and Alice represent the struggle between light and darkness, — the good and evil principle. That antagonism presents the finest of all contrasts to a composer. The sweetest melodies placed side by side with harsh and cruel songs were the natural consequence of the libretto form ; unfortunately, in the German composer's score the devils sing better than the saints. The celestial inspirations frequently fall short of their origin, and if the composer leaves the infernal lines for a moment, he hastens to return, weary with the effort he has made to abandon them. Melody, the golden thread that should never be broken in so vast a composition, is often lacking in Meyerbeer's work. Sentiment there is none ; the heart plays no part at all ; and we find few of those delightful themes, those artless songs which touch all sympathies and leave a tender impression on the soul. Harmony reigns supreme, instead of being a basis or background from which the groups of the musical picture should detach themselves. Those discordant chords, far from touching the spectator, only excite his soul to a sentiment analogous to that which he feels at the sight of a tight-rope walker suspended between life and death. The charming songs

never come at the right moment to soothe these nervous sensations. One would really believe that the composer had no other object than to appear fantastic; he seizes upon every excuse to produce an eccentric effect without troubling himself about truth, or musical unity, or the inefficiency of the voices, which are drowned in the instrumental hurly-burly.”

“Hush, hush, my friend,” said Gambara; “I am still under the enchantment of that wonderful song of hell, which the trumpets render still more terrible,—a new instrumentation! The broken cadences which give such vigor to Robert’s song, the cavatina in the fourth act, the finale of the first, still hold me under the spell of some superhuman power. No, the composition of Glück himself never produced such a powerful effect; I am amazed at so much science.”

“*Signor maestro*,” said Andrea, smiling, “permit me to contradict you. Before Glück wrote he reflected long. He calculated all chances, and selected plans which could be modified later under his inspirations of detail; but he never allowed himself to stray from his self-appointed path. There lies the secret of his vigorous accentuation, that musical elocution which throbs with truth. I agree with you that the science of Meyerbeer’s opera is very great; but science becomes a defect when it isolates itself from inspiration; and I think I perceive in that work the weary toil of an ingenious mind which culled its music from many an opera rejected or forgotten,—appropriating their themes, enlarging, remodelling, concentrating them. But there

happened to him, as to all imitators, the misfortune of abusing good things. This clever gleaner in musical harvest-fields is prodigal of discords, which, becoming too frequent, end by annoying the ear, and habituating it to startling effects which a composer should be chary of giving, so as to bring out their full value when the situation demands it. These enharmonic transitions are repeated to satiety, and the abuse of the plagal cadence takes a great deal from the religious solemnity of the piece. I know very well that every composer has his own particular forms, to which he returns again and again in spite of himself; but he ought to watch himself and guard against this defect. A picture that had none but blues and reds in it would be very far from truth, and fatiguing to the eye. Thus the almost uniform rhythm of the different parts of 'Robert' gives monotony to the whole score. As to the effect of the trumpets, of which you speak, it has long been known in Germany, and what Meyerbeer gives us for new was employed by Mozart, who made his chorus of devils in 'Don Giovanni' sing in that way."

Andrea tried to make Gambara refute him and so return to his true musical sentiments; all the while leading him to further libations, and endeavoring to show him that his inspired mission in this world was not to regenerate an art that was beyond his faculties, but to seek expression for his thought under another form, which was in fact poetry.

"You don't understand that great musical drama, my dear count," said Gambara, carelessly. He stood a mo-

ment before Andrea's piano, tried the notes, listened to their tone, seated himself, and appeared to be thinking for some minutes as if to collect his own ideas.

"In the first place you must know," he said, "that a trained ear like mine perceives at once the adaptations of which you speak. Yes, this music is selected with love from the treasures of a rich and fruitful imagination into which science has pressed ideas which issue from it in pure musical essence. I'll explain it to you."

He rose to move the wax-lights into the adjoining room and before returning to his seat drank a large glass of Giro, that Sardinian wine which contains as much fire as any old Tokay ever lighted.

"The truth is," said Gambara, "this music was not written for sceptics nor for those who cannot love. If you never in your life experienced the vigorous assaults of an evil spirit who obscures the purpose for which you are aiming, who brings a painful end to the noblest hopes,—in a word, if you have never seen the devil's tail whisking about this world,—the opera of 'Robert le Diable' is to you what the Apocalypse is to those who think that everything ends when they do. But if, persecuted and unhappy, you comprehend the Spirit of Evil, that great ape which hourly destroys the works of God; if you imagine him as not having loved but violated an almost divine woman, gaining from that deed the joys of paternity to the extent of preferring to have his son eternally miserable with him rather than see him eternally happy with God; if you imagine the soul of the mother hovering around her son to draw him

from the horrible temptations of his father, you will even then have but a faint idea of that vast poem to which little is wanting to make it the rival of Mozart's 'Don Giovanni.' 'Don Giovanni' is superior, I admit, through the perfection of its form. 'Robert le Diable' represents ideas; 'Don Giovanni' excites sensations. 'Don Giovanni' is still the only musical work in which harmony and melody are in exactly equal proportions. In that alone lies the secret of its superiority to 'Robert,' for 'Robert' is more teeming. But what is the good of these comparisons, since both works are beautiful with their own beauty? To me, who have groaned under the reiterated assaults of the Evil One, 'Robert' speaks more vigorously than to you; I find it both vast and concentrated. Truly, thanks to you, I have just inhabited the world of dreams where our senses are magnified, where the universe unfolds in gigantic proportions in comparison with man." He was silent for a moment. "I still quiver," continued the unhappy artist, "at the sound of those four bars with the timbals which shook my very being when they opened the short, abrupt introduction where the trombone solo, the flutes, the hautboys, and the clarionet cast a fantastic color into the soul. That *andante* in *c* minor foreshadows the theme of the invocation of souls in the abbey; magnifying that scene by its announcement of a purely spiritual struggle. I shuddered!"

Gambara struck the notes with a firm hand and developed Meyerbeer's passage in a masterly manner with

a sort of explosion of soul characteristic of Liszt. The instrument was no longer a piano, it was an orchestra — the genius of music was evoked.

“That is Mozart’s style,” he cried. “Hear how this German handles chords, by what learned modulations he leads through terror to the dominant of c. I hear Hell! The curtain rises. What do I behold? the only spectacle to which we can give the epithet infernal; an orgy of knights in Sicily. The chorus in f contains all human passions let loose in that Bacchic *allegro*. Every thread by which the devil leads us is shaken. That is the sort of joy which seizes men when they dance on the brink of an abyss; they whirl themselves into vertigo. What movement in the chorus! From it the reality of life, an artless bourgeois life, stands out (G minor) in Raimbaud’s song, which is full of simplicity. That worthy man, expressing the green plenteousness of Normandy, refreshes my soul as he recalls it to the drunken Robert. The sweetness of that loved land shines like a golden thread through the darkness of the scene. Now comes the marvellous ballad in c major, accompanied by the chorus in c minor which tells the story admirably. Then bursts forth ‘Robert am I!’ The fury of the prince offended by his vassal is no longer a natural fury; but soon it calms down, for memories of childhood return with Alice in the *allegro* (A major) so full of movement and grace. Do you hear the cries of innocence persecuted already as it enters the infernal drama? ‘No, no!’” sang Gambara, making the piano echo him. “His native land and all its

memories bloom once more in Robert's heart, — the shade of his mother rises, attended by soothing religious thoughts. Religion inspires that beautiful ballad in E major where we find a miraculous progression of harmony and melody on the words : —

“ For in the skies as on the earth
His mother prayeth for him.”

The struggle begins between the mysterious Powers and the sole man who has in his veins the fire of hell to resist them. And, that you may fully understand it, listen to the entrance of Bertram, which the great musician covers with an orchestral *ritornello* recalling Raimbault's ballad. What art ! what linking of all the parts ! what powers of construction ! The devil is beneath all ; he hides, he wriggles. With the terror of Alice, who recognizes the devil of the Saint Michel in her own Norman village, the combat of the two principles begins. The musical theme develops — with what varied phases ! Here comes in the antagonism of parts, so necessary to every opera, shown in a noble recitative (such as Glück composed) between Bertram and Robert : —

“ Thou wilt never know to what excess I love thee.”

That diabolical c minor, that terrible bass of Bertram which countermines and destroys every effort of the man of violent temperament, — to me it is all startling, terrifying. Must crime have its criminal, the executioner his prey ? Must misfortune swallow up an artist's genius ? Must disease kill its victim ? Can the guardian angel protect and preserve the Christian ?

Here is the finale, — the gambling scene where Bertram torments his son and drives him to terrible emotions. Robert, despoiled, angry, destroying everything about him, desirous of killing, of breathing fire and slaughter, seems to him indeed his son; the father sees the likeness. What atrocious gayety in Bertram's words, 'I laugh at thy blows'! How the Venetian *barcarole* tints this finale! By what bold transitions that infamous pater- nity returns upon the scene to drag Robert to the gambling-table! This opening of the opera is over-whelming to those who follow out such themes in the depths of their hearts, giving them the full meaning which the composer intended to convey. Love alone could oppose that grand symphony of voices in which you will find no monotony nor the employment of the same means; it is a unit and yet varied, — the character of all that is grand and natural. I breathe freer; I reach the higher sphere of a chivalrous court; I hear the fresh and sweet, yet slightly melancholy phrases of Isabelle and the chorus of women in two sections echoing each other, reminding us, it may be, of the Moorish influence on Spain. Here the terrible music is softened by mellow tones, like a tempest calming down, till it comes to this dainty flowery duet, so well modulated and not in the least like the preceding music. After the uproar of the camp of martial heroes and adventurers, comes a picture of love. I thank thee, poet! My heart could have borne no more. If those daisies of light opera did not blossom for my gathering, if I had not listened to the sweet gayety of the woman who loves and who

consoles, I could not have borne the awful note with which Bertram reappears, warning his son (as he hears him promise the adored princess that he will conquer with the arms she gives him), 'If I permit it!' To the hope of the gambler reforming through love, the love of that exquisite Sicilian (do you not see her, with her falcon eye?), to the hope of the man, Hell answers in that awful cry: 'Robert of Normandy, beware!' Do you not admire the sombre horror of those long, splendid notes, 'In the nigh forest'? All the fascination of 'Jerusalem Delivered' is in them, just as Chivalry appears in that chorus with the Spanish movement, and in the *tempo di marcia*. What originality in that *allegro*; in the modulations of the four attuned timbals (C D, C G). What grace in the call to the tournament! The movement, the impulse of the heroic life of the period is there; the soul unites with it; I read a romance of chivalry and a poem. The exposition ends; the resources of the art of music seem exhausted; you have heard nothing like it; and yet all was homogeneous. You have seen human life in its one and only real aspect: 'Shall I be happy or unhappy?' ask the philosophers; 'Shall I be saved or damned?' say the Christians."

Here Gambara paused on the last notes of the chorus, which he drew forth in a lingering, melancholy way; then he rose to pour out and drink another large glass of Giro. That semi-African wine lit up once more the incandescence of his face which the passionate and marvellous execution of Meyerbeer's opera had slightly paled.

“That nothing be lacking to the composition,” he resumed, “the great artist has freely given us the only burlesque song which a devil could allow himself to sing, that of the temptation of a poor troubadour. He puts horror and a jest side by side, a jest which swallows up the only reality that appears in the weird opera; namely, the pure and tranquil loves of Alice and of Raimbaut; their life is to be troubled by anticipated vengeance. Great souls alone can feel the nobility that animates these comic airs. They have neither the gaudiness of our Italian music nor the vulgarity of Parisian street favorites. The majesty of Olympus lingers near them. The bitter laugh of a divinity contrasts with the surprise of a troubadour Don-Juanized. Without this touch of grandeur the return to the general tone of the opera would be too abrupt, full as it is of dreadful rage, in diminished sevenths ending in that infernal waltz which brings us, finally, face to face with devils. With what vigor Bertram’s couplet detaches itself (B minor) from the Devil’s chorus, depicting paternal despair mingling with demoniac voices! What an exquisite transition is the arrival of Alice with the *ritornello* in B flat! I still hear those angelic songs of heavenly freshness, the warble of the nightingale after a tempest. The great thought of the whole thus permeates details; for what better could be contrasted with this writhing of devils in their den than the marvellous air of Alice, —

‘When I forsook my Normandy!’

The golden thread of that melody runs through the whole length of the powerful harmony like a celestial hope, embroidering it, — and with what wonderful ability! Never does genius lose its hold on the science that guides it. The song of Alice in *B* flat is caught up and linked with *F* sharp, the dominant of the infernal chorus. Do you hear the *tremolo* of the orchestra? Robert is bidden to the symposium of devils. Bertram re-enters, and here is the culminating point of musical interest, a recitative comparable only to the grandest compositions of the greatest masters; the struggle in *E* flat between the two athletes, Heaven and Hell, — the one in ‘Yes, thou knowest me!’ (on a diminished seventh), the other in that *F* sublime: ‘Heaven is with me!’ Hell and the Cross stand face to face. Then follow Bertram’s threats to Alice, the most awful pathos in existence; the Genius of Evil revealing itself complacently, and tempting, as ever, through self-interest. The entrance of Robert, and the magnificent trio in *A* flat without accompaniment, opens the struggle between the two opposing forces for possession of the man. See how clearly this is produced,” cried Gambara, reproducing the scene with a passionate execution which thrilled Andrea. “All this avalanche of music from the four-time of the timbals has rolled onward to this struggle of the three voices. The spell of Evil triumphs. Alice flees away. You hear the duet in *D* between Bertram and Robert; the devil drives his claws into Robert’s heart; he rends it, the better to make it his; he summons all things to

his aid ; honor, hope, eternal happiness, all are made to shine in Robert's eyes ; he carries him, like Jesus, to the pinnacle of the Temple and shows him all the treasures of the earth, that jewel-case of Evil : finally, he piques his courage, and the noble feelings of the man answer forth in the cry : —

“ To the knights of mine own land,
Honor was ever their main-stay.”

Then, to crown all, comes the theme that so fatally opened the opera ; here it is, the leading song in that magnificent evocation of souls : —

“ Nuns who sleep beneath that frigid stone,
Hear you me? ”

Gloriously carried through, the music ends gloriously by the *allegro vivace* of the bacchanal in D minor. Hell triumphs ! Roll on, music ! swathe us in thy many folds ; roll on, beguiling ! The infernal Powers have seized their prey, they hold him, they dance about him That noble genius, born to vanquish and to reign, — behold him lost ! the devils are joyful ; poverty stifles genius, passion destroys the knight.”

Here Gambara expanded the *bacchanale* himself, improvising clever variations and accompanying the instrument in a melodious voice, as if he needed to give utterance to sufferings he had felt.

“ Do you hear the celestial complaints of neglected love ? ” he continued. “ Isabelle calls Robert from the midst of that great chorus of knights on their way to the tournament, where the themes of the second act

reappear to mark distinctly that the events of the third act happen in the sphere of nature. Real life is felt. The chorus subsides as the witcheries of Hell approach, brought by Robert with the talisman; the wonders of the third act are now developed.* First the tenor-violin duet, where the rhythm shows plainly the brutal desires of a man who is capable of all, while the princess, with plaintive moans, endeavors to recall her lover to reason. There, the musician put himself in a position that was difficult to carry through; yet he mastered it by the loveliest thing in the whole work. What exquisite melody in the cavatina, 'Mercy for thee!' That piece alone would make the fame of the opera, for every woman fancies herself contending with a knight. Never was music so passionate nor so dramatic. The whole world now turns against the reprobate. It may be objected that this finale is like that of 'Don Giovanni;' but there is this enormous difference: a noble faith inspires Isabelle, a perfect love able to rescue Robert, who disdainfully casts back the devilish talisman confided to him, while Don Giovanni, on the other hand, persists in his unbelief. Besides, this accusation has been made against all composers who have written finales since the days of Mozart. The finale of 'Don Giovanni' is one of those classic forms which are written for all time. At last we hear Religion, rising omnipotent with a voice that rules the universe, calling all sorrows to console them, all repentances to give them peace. The whole audience is stirred by the accents of that chorus: —

“ Wretched or guilty men,
Hasten, approach ! ”

Hitherto, in the awful tumult of unchained passions, the sacred voice has not been heard ; but at this critical moment it sounds, the divine Church rises effulgent. I am astonished to find here at the close of such harmonic treasures a new vein of wealth in that fine masterpiece, ‘ Glory to Providence ! ’ written in Handel’s manner. Robert enters, distracted, rending our souls with his, ‘ Would I could pray ! ’ Constrained by the edict of hell, Bertram pursues his son and makes a last effort. Alice reveals the mother ; and you hear the glorious trio to which the whole opera has advanced, the triumph of the soul over matter, the victory of the spirit of Good over the spirit of Evil. The songs of faith silence the songs of hell ; joy reappears in splendor. But here the music weakens ; I see a cathedral only ; I do not hear the choir of happy angels, the divine voices of souls delivered, giving thanks for the union of Robert and Alice. We ought not to be left under the gloom of the Satanic spell ; we should leave the scene with hope at heart. I, a Catholic musician, I needed, my soul demanded, another prayer of Moses. Also, I would fain have seen Germany in the lists against Italy ; and know what Meyerbeer would have done to rival Rossini. However, the author may say, in justification of this defect, that after five hours of such solid, substantial music Parisians prefer a decorative end to a musical masterpiece. You heard the acclamations that followed the piece ; it will run for

five hundred nights. If Frenchmen understand this music —”

“They understand it because it has ideas,” said the count.

“No; only because it powerfully presents an image of struggles in which so many souls are worsted; and because all individual existences are fastened to it, as it were, by memory. Therefore it is that I, an unhappy man, grieve that I do not hear at its close the songs of those celestial voices I have long heard in dreams.”

Here Gambara fell into ecstasy, improvising the most melodious and harmonious cavatina that Andrea had ever heard; a song divine divinely sung; a theme of grace comparable only to that of the *O filii et filiae*, and full of charm which none but musical genius of the highest order could have given. The count was filled with admiration: the clouds were breaking; heaven's blue shone forth; angelic forms appeared and raised the veils that hid the sanctuary; the light of heaven streamed down in torrents. Silence soon reigned. The count, surprised to hear no more, looked up at Gambara, who, with fixed eyes and rigid body, stammered the word “God!” The count awaited the moment when the composer came back from the celestial regions where the prismatic wings of inspiration bore him, resolved to illumine his mind with the light which he himself brought down.

“Well,” he said, offering more wine, and touching glasses, “you see that this German has written, as you say, a sublime opera without troubling himself about

theory ; whereas musicians who study the grammar of their art are frequently ; like literary critics, intolerable composers."

"Then you do not like my music?"

"I do not say that ; but if, instead of perpetually dissecting how to express ideas, — instead of driving musical principles to an extreme, which only makes you lose your way, — you would simply awaken our sensations, I am sure you would be better understood, unless, indeed, you have not mistaken your vocation. You are a great poet."

"What!" exclaimed Gambara, "are twenty-five years of toilsome study wasted? Must I learn the imperfect language of men, — I, who hold the key to the Celestial Word? Ah! if you are right, let me die!"

"You? no, no! You are great and you are strong. You shall begin another life, and I, your friend, will sustain you. Let us show to the world the rare and noble union of an artist and a rich man who understand each other."

"Are you telling me the truth?" said Gambara, rigid with sudden stupor.

"I have told you already, you are more a poet than a musician."

"Poet! poet! That is better than nothing. Tell me the truth, — whom do you value most, Mozart or Homer?"

"I admire them equally."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor."

“Hum! One word more. What think you of Meyerbeer and Byron?”

“By naming them together you yourself have judged them.”

The count's carriage was at the door; the composer and his titled physician were driven to Gambara's residence. Running quickly upstairs, they were soon in Marianna's presence. Gambara threw himself into the arms of his wife, who drew back a step and averted her head. The husband stepped back himself, bent toward the count, and said in a hollow voice, “You might, at least, have left me my madness.” Then he drooped his head and fell.

“What have you done?” cried Marianna, casting at the body a look in which pity struggled with disgust. “He is dead-drunk!”

The count, with the help of his valet, raised Gambara and put him to bed; then Andrea left the house, his heart full of horrid joy.

The next day he purposely let the hour of his daily visit go by; he was beginning to fear that he had duped himself, and had paid too dear for the comfort and virtue of that humble household whose peace he had forever troubled.

Giardini presently appeared, bringing a note from Marianna.

“Come,” she wrote, “the harm done is not as great as you desired, cruel man.”

“Eccellenza,” said the cook, while Andrea dressed himself, “you entertained us magnificently last night.

But you must allow that, apart from the wines, which were excellent, your maître-d'hotel did not serve a single dish worthy of the table of an epicure. You won't deny, I suppose, that the viands placed before you on the day when you did me the honor to sit at my table were superlatively better than those that sullied your magnificent silver service last night. Consequently, when I awoke this morning I bethought me of your promise to make me *chef*. I look upon myself now as attached to your household."

"The same thought has been in my mind for the last few days," replied Andrea. "I have mentioned you to the secretary of the Austrian embassy, and you will be allowed to cross the Alps without danger whenever you like. I have a castle in Croatia which I seldom visit; there you may combine the functions of porter, butler, cook, and steward on a salary of six hundred francs a year. This emolument will be that of your wife also, who will do the rest of the work. You can try your experiments *in anima vili*, — that is to say, on the stomachs of my vassals. Here's a cheque for the costs of the journey."

Giardini kissed the count's hand in his Neapolitan way.

"Eccellenza," he said, "I accept the cheque without accepting the situation. It would be dishonorable in me to abandon my art and lose the good opinion of the finest epicures, who are undoubtedly those of Paris."

When Andrea reached Gambara's apartment the composer rose and came forward to meet him.

“ My generous friend,” he said frankly, “ either you took advantage of the weakness of my head to play a joke on me last night, or your brain is no stronger than mine when tested by the native fumes of our good wines of Latium. I choose the latter supposition ; I prefer to doubt your stomach rather than your heart. But however that may be, I renounce forever the use of wine ; for its abuse led me into culpable folly last evening. When I think that I degraded — ” (He cast a look of terror at Marianna.) “ As for the wretched opera which you took me to hear, I have thought it over : it is nothing more than music made by ordinary methods ; heaps of notes piled together, *verba et voces*, — the dregs of that nectar which I quaff in deep draughts as I utter the celestial music which it is given to me to hear ! I know the origin of those patched up phrases. That ‘ Glory to Providence ’ is too like Handel ; the chorus of knights on their way to the tournament is cousin-german to the Scotch air given in the ‘ Dame Blanche.’ In short, if the opera pleases, it is only because the music derives from everywhere and is therefore popular. Now I must leave you, my dear friend. I have had, since morning, an idea in my head which bids me rise to God on the wings of music ; but I wanted to see you, and say this much to you. Adieu ! I go to ask pardon of my guardian muse. We will dine together this evening ; but no more wine, — at least, not for me. Oh ! I am quite resolved.”

“ I despair of him,” said Andrea, coloring high.

“ You enlighten my conscience,” cried Marianna, “ I

dared not question it. My friend, my friend, the fault is not ours; he *will not* let us cure him."

Six years later, in January, 1837, many musical artists who were unlucky enough to injure their wind or stringed instruments were in the habit of bringing them to a dilapidated and disreputable house in the rue Froidmanteau, where the said instruments were mended by an old Italian, named Gambara, living on the fifth floor. For the last five years this man had lived alone, his wife having abandoned him. An instrument, called by him a *panharmonicon* and from which he expected fame, had been sold by the sheriff at public auction, together with a mass of music-paper thickly blotted over. The day after the sale, this paper appeared in the markets, around pats of butter, and fish and fruit. In this way three operas — of which the poor man talked a great deal, though a former Neapolitan cook, now a seller of broken victuals, declared they were a heap of rubbish — were disseminated through Paris in the wicker baskets of the hucksters. But what matter for that? the owner of the house got his rent and the sheriff's men their pay. The Neapolitan victual-dealer, who sold to the prostitutes of the rue Froidmanteau the scraps remaining from the fine dinner-parties given in society the night before, was always ready to tell how the Signora Gambara had followed a Milanese nobleman to Italy, and no one now knew what had become of her. Weary of poverty and wretchedness she was probably ruining that count by her extravagance, for

they adored each other with a passion that in all his Neapolitan experience he had never beheld.

One evening, towards the end of this same month of January, as Giardini, the victual-seller, was talking with a girl who came to buy her supper, about this glorious Marianna, so pure, so beautiful, so nobly self-devoted, but who, nevertheless, *had ended like all the rest*, the girl and Giardini's wife noticed in the street a tall thin woman, with a dusty, blackened face, — a perambulating, galvanized skeleton, who was looking at the numbers and trying to find a house.

“*Ecco la Marianna!*” cried Giardini.

Marianna recognized the poor fellow, without giving heed to the misfortunes which had brought him down to his present miserable trade. She entered the shop and sat down, wearied with a walk from Fontainebleau; the poor woman had come forty miles that day and had begged her bread from Turin to Paris. The sight of her horrified that miserable trio. Nothing remained of her marvellous beauty but a pair of fading, anguished eyes. The sole thing she had found faithful to her was misfortune. She was heartily welcomed by the old mender of instruments, who saw her enter his room with inexpressible pleasure.

“Here you are, my poor Marianna,” he said, kindly. “During your absence *they* sold my instrument and my operas.”

It was difficult to kill the fatted calf for the return of the wanderer; but Giardini contributed some scraps of salmon, the street-girl paid for the wine, Gambara gave

his bread, Signora Giardini laid the cloth, and these many and diverse sorrows supped together in the musician's garret. When questioned about her history Marianna refused to answer, but she raised her fine eyes to heaven, and said in a low voice to Giardini : —

“ Married to a *danseuse*.”

“ How are you going to live,” asked the girl ; “ your tramp from Milan has killed you and — ”

“ — made me an old woman,” said Marianna. “ No, it is not fatigue, not poverty, that has done it, but grief.”

“ Bah ! ” said the girl, “ why did n't you send money to your man here ? ”

Marianna answered only with a look, but it stabbed the girl to the heart.

“ Proud indeed ! ” she exclaimed, “ excuse me — What good will that do her ? ” she whispered to Giardini.

That year all musicians took extraordinary care of their instruments and the business of repairing them did not suffice for the daily bread of that poor home ; the wife earned little by her needle, and the pair were reduced to use their talents in the lowest of all spheres. Both went at dusk to the Champs Elysées and sang duets, which Gambara, poor soul, accompanied on a wretched guitar. On their way thither, the wife, who on these occasions covered her head with a miserable muslin veil, took her husband to a grocery in the faubourg Saint-Honoré and gave him enough brandy to intoxicate him, without which his music would have been

intolerable. Then they took their stand before the gay world seated on chairs along the promenade, and the greatest genius of the day, the unknown Orpheus of modern music, played fragments of his operas to the sitting crowd, and these samples were so remarkable that they won a few pennies from Parisian indolence. One day, a dilettante of the Bouffons, not recognizing the opera from which these pieces were taken, questioned the woman with the Grecian head-dress when she held out the round metallic plate in which she gathered alms.

“My dear, where did you get that music?”

“From the opera of ‘Mohammed,’” answered Marianna.

As Rossini had composed an opera called “Mohammed II.” the gentleman remarked to the lady who was with him, “What a pity that they will not give us at the opera-house those works of Rossini that are least known. Certainly, this is glorious music.”

Gambara smiled.

A few days ago it was necessary for the poor couple to pay the paltry sum of thirty-six francs, the rent of their miserable garret. The grocer would give no credit for the brandy with which the wife intoxicated her husband to make him play his best. Gambara’s music then became insufferable; the ears of the rich populace were offended and the metallic plate returned empty. It was nine in the evening when a beautiful Italian, the Principessa Massimilla di Varese, took pity on the suffering pair. She gave Marianna forty francs, and ques-

tioned both when she discovered from the wife's thanks that she was a Venetian. Prince Emilio, who accompanied his wife, asked the history of their misfortunes, which Marianna related without complaint of man or of heaven.

"Madame," said Gambara, who was not drunk, "we are the victims of our own superiority. My music is beautiful; but when music rises from sensation to idea, none but persons of genius can listen to it; for they alone have the power to draw forth its meaning. My misfortune has been that I listened to the songs of angels and thought that men could understand them. It is so with women when their love assumes a form divine, — men no longer comprehend them."

Those words were worth the forty francs Massimilla had just bestowed, and she drew another gold piece from her purse, saying as she gave it to Marianna, that she should write to Andrea Marcosini.

"Do not write to him, madame," said Marianna, "and may God preserve your beauty."

"Let us take care of them," said the princess to her husband; "this man has remained faithful to the IDEAL which *we* have killed."

When Gambara saw the gold he wept; then there came to him a reminiscence of his former scientific labors, and the poor composer uttered, as he wiped away his tears, a saying which the attendant circumstances rendered piteous: —

"Water is a burned substance."

MELMOTH ABSOLVED.

MELMOTH ABSOLVED.

TO M. LE GÉNÉRAL BARON DE POMMEREUL.

In memory of the constant friendship which allied our fathers and exists between their sons.

DE BALZAC.

I.

THE CRIME.

THERE is a nature of man which civilization obtains in the social kingdom as florists create in the vegetable kingdom, by the education of hot-houses, a hybrid species which they cannot reproduce either by seed or cuttings. That man is a cashier, — a true anthropomorphic product; watered by religious ideas; kept erect by the guillotine; lopped by vice; and vegetating at its third stage, between an estimable wife and troublesome children.

The number of cashiers in Paris will always be a problem for physiologists. Has any one ever understood the terms of the proposition of which the known *x* is a cashier? — a man who is incessantly in presence of wealth like a cat before a mouse in a cage; a man

who has the faculty to remain seated on a cane chair for seven-eighths of the year, and seven or eight hours of the twenty-four in a wire box without more space to move than that of a lieutenant in his cabin at sea; a man who does not ossify his knees or the bones of his pelvis; a man who has grandeur enough to be of no account; a man capable of being disgusted with money by dint of handling it. Ask religion, morality, educational institutions of any kind to furnish you with that product, and give them Paris, that city of Temptation, that annex of Hell, as the centre in which to place him, that cashier! Well, religions will defile before you, one after the other, colleges, institutions, morality, all the great and the petty human legislations will treat you like your intimate friend from whom you want to borrow a thousand francs. They will wear a dismal air; they will shake their heads and motion to the guillotine, just as your friend will direct you to the usurer's door — one of a hundred others leading to the hospital.

Nevertheless, the moral nature has its caprices; it does allow itself now and then to make honest men and cashiers. Consequently, the pirates whom we dignify with the name of bankers, and who take out a license of six thousand francs as a corsair applies for his letters-of-marque, have such veneration for these rare products of Virtue's incubation that they encage them in the wire box we have mentioned, in order to keep them as government keeps curious animals. If the cashier has imagination, if he has passions, if he

loves his wife, and if that woman complains, or has ambition or vanity, the cashier succumbs. Search the history of banks: you will not find a single instance of a cashier rising to what is called "a position." They go to the galleys, they go to foreign parts, or they vegetate in some remote second-floor of the Marais. When Parisian cashiers reflect seriously on their intrinsic value, a cashier will be priceless.

It is true that certain men can be nothing but cashiers, as others are ineradicably swindlers. Strange civilization! Society awards to virtue two thousand francs a year for its old age, a second-floor lodging, bread *ad libitum*, a few new bandannas, and an old woman with her children. As for vice, if it has any boldness, if it can cleverly get round an article of the Code, as Turenne got round Montecuculi, society legitimatizes its stolen millions, crams it with honors and decorations, and upholds its reputation. Government follows suit with this profoundly illogical society. Government raises a draft of precocious talent from our young intellects of eighteen to twenty years of age; it wears out great brains by premature toil in testing them on the benches of its hot-house as gardeners do their seeds; it trains for this business a body of jurymen who weigh talents as gold is assayed at the Mint. Then, out of five hundred brains heated by hope, which the intellect of the country sends it annually, it culls a third, pops them into its big bags called National Schools, and shakes them there for three years. Though each of these seeds

or grafts represents in-itself a great capital, the government turns them all, as one might say, to cashiers: that is, it makes them engineers in ordinary, it employs them as captains of artillery; in short, it takes the best brains the country affords, gives them the highest rank in subaltern positions, and keeps them there. Then when these picked men, rich in mathematics and learned in science, reach the age of fifty, government rewards their services with the second-floor, the ability to keep wife and children on bread *ad libitum*, and all the other comforts of mediocrity. If, out of these duped numbers, five or six contrive to escape and reach to the summit of some distinction, is it not a miracle?

This is the true record of talent and virtue in their relations to government and to society in an age which calls itself progressive. Without these preparatory observations an event which recently occurred in Paris would seem improbable; whereas, if viewed in the light of the foregoing statement, it may perhaps strike some minds sufficiently superior to perceive the real sores of a civilization which, since 1815, has superseded the principle Honor by the principle Money.

About five o'clock in the afternoon of a gloomy autumn day, the cashier of one of the largest banking-houses in Paris was still working by the help of a lamp which had been lighted for some time. According to the ways and customs of business, the counting-room was situated in the darkest corner of a low and narrow *entresol*. To reach it, it was necessary to follow a

passage, lighted from above, which led past the various offices, the doors of which were ticketed like those of a watering-place hotel. The porter of the establishment had said phlegmatically since four o'clock, "The bank is closed." At the present moment the offices were empty, the couriers despatched, the clerks dispersed, the wives of the heads of the house were awaiting their lovers, and the two bankers themselves were preparing to dine with their mistresses. All things were in order.

The place where the safe was built into the wall was at the back of the wire cage in which the cashier was now seated, employed, no doubt, in making up his accounts. The opening in front allowed a sight of the iron door of the safe, the fastenings of which, thanks to the art of modern locksmiths, defied the efforts of burglars. That door opened only at the will of him who knew the password, the letters of which were kept by the lock incorruptibly secret, — a beautiful realization of the "Open, Sesame!" of the Arabian Nights. But that was not all. The lock fired a blunderbuss in the face of whosoever, having obtained the password, was ignorant of the final secret, the *ultima ratio* of the mechanical dragon. The door of the room, the walls of the room, the shutters of the windows in the room, in fact the whole room was lined with four thicknesses of sheet-iron hidden beneath a thin veneer of wood.

The shutters had been closed, the door locked. If any man could think himself in total solitude and

remote from every eye, it was the cashier of the house of Nucingen and Co., bankers; rue Saint-Lazare. The deepest silence reigned in that iron cave. The stove was casting out the clammy heat which produces a muffling effect upon the brain and the nauseating uneasiness caused by an orgy over night. The office stove benumbs, stifles, and contributes in a singular degree to stupefy porters and clerks. A room with a stove is a distiller which dissolves men of energy, takes the tension from their springs and the sap from their wills. Offices are the forcing-pits of mediocrities required by government to maintain the feudality of money on which rests our present social contract. [See "Bureaucracy."] The mephitic heat there produced by an agglomeration of men is not one of the least effective causes of the progressive degeneracy of intellect; the brain from which the most nitrogen is disengaged asphyxiates the rest in course of time.

The cashier was a man about forty years of age, whose bald spot shone beneath the rays of the Carcel lamp which stood upon the table beside him. This light glittered on the white hairs that threaded the black hair which was plastered down the sides of his head, giving it, in conjunction with the rounded lines of his face, the appearance of a cannon-ball. His complexion was the color of brick. A few wrinkles surrounded his blue eyes. His hand was the dimpled hand of a fat man. A blue coat, slightly worn in some prominent places, and the shining creases of his trousers presented to the eye the sort of dilapidation

that comes of usage, which defies the brush, and gives to superficial people a high idea of the thrift and the integrity of a man who is philosophical enough to wear old clothes. Yet it is not rare to find persons who save their pennies wasteful, careless, or incapable in the greater things of life.

The cashier's buttonhole was adorned with the ribbon of the Legion of honor, for he had formerly been a major of dragoons under the Empire. Monsieur de Nucingen, who was an army contractor before he became a banker, having had occasion to know the major's qualities in a responsible situation before the misfortunes of war brought him down from his high position, took him into his service on a salary of five hundred francs a month. The soldier had been a cashier since 1813, in which year he was cured of a wound received on the retreat from Moscow at Studzianka after languishing for six months in hospital at Strasburg, to which place the Emperor had sent a number of distinguished wounded officers for special care. The major, whose name was Castanier, was then retired with the brevet rank of colonel and a pension of twenty-four hundred francs.

Castanier, in whom for the last ten years the cashier had completely killed out the soldier, inspired Nucingen with such confidence that he employed him to do the writing of his private office, which was situated directly behind the counting-room, and into which the baron descended from his family apartments by a secret staircase. In that private office all important

business was decided; there was the sieve which sifted all proposals, the den which sat in judgment on the money-market; thence all notes and letters of credit issued; there, finally, were the *grand-livre* and the day-book, in which the work of the several departments was summed up and recorded.

After locking the door of communication to the secret staircase, Castanier returned to his seat, and began to consider and compare several letters of credit drawn upon the famous house of Watschildine in London. Then he took a pen and imitated at the bottom of each the signature of Nucingen and Co. At the moment when he was considering which of these false signatures was the best imitation, he raised his head as if a gnat had stung him, obeying an inward presentiment, which said in his mind: "Thou art not alone!" and as he did so, the forger saw, beyond the wires of his cage and close to the low opening by the counter, a man, whose step had made no sound, who seemed not to breathe, a man who had no doubt entered from the passage, the door of which Castanier saw was open.

The old soldier felt, for the first time in his life, fear; a fear which held him rigid, with gaping mouth and stupid eyes, before that being whose aspect in itself was alarming enough not to need the mysterious circumstances of such an apparition. The oblong cut of the stranger's face, the projecting lines of his forehead, the harsh tones of his flesh, not to speak of the style of his clothes, proclaimed him an Englishman.

The man was repulsively English. His top-coat and collar, his enormous neckcloth, from which issued a shirt-frill with flattened pleats, its whiteness heightening the livid tones of an impassible face with cold, red lips that seemed destined to suck the blood of dying men, — all these visible things indicated the black gaiters buttoned to the knee and the rest of that semi-puritanical apparel which a rich Englishman dons when he goes out afoot.

The gleam cast by the stranger's eyes was unendurable, causing an acute sensation in the soul increased still farther by the rigidity of his features. This ghastly, fleshless being seemed to have within him some devouring element impossible to satisfy. He must have digested his food so rapidly that he could doubtless eat incessantly without bringing a tinge of color to any lineament of his face. He might have swallowed a ton of the strongest Tokay without affecting that piercing look which read the soul, nor the relentless intellect that seemed to dive to the bottom of all things. In him there was something of the tameless, tranquil nature of a tiger.

“Monsieur, I have come to draw the value of this bill of exchange,” he said to Castanier, in a voice which put itself into communication with every fibre of the cashier's body, striking them with a violence comparable only to that of an electric shock.

“The bank is closed,” replied Castanier.

“It is open,” said the stranger, pointing to the safe. “To-morrow is Sunday, and I cannot wait.

The sum is five hundred thousand francs; you have it in that safe, and I must have it; I owe it."

"But, monsieur, how did you get in here?"

The Englishman smiled, and his smile terrified Castanier. No answer was ever more complete nor more peremptory than the disdainful, imperious curve formed by the lips of that man. Castanier turned round and took from the safe fifty packets of banknotes of ten thousand francs each, and as he gave them to the stranger, who had thrown to him a bill of exchange accepted by Nucingen and Co., he was seized with a sort of convulsive shudder, for he saw the scarlet rays which darted from the eyes of the stranger as they rested on the forged signatures to the letters of credit.

"Your — receipt — is — not here," said Castanier, turning over the bill of exchange.

"Hand me your pen," replied the Englishman.

Castanier gave him the pen with which he had committed the forgeries. The stranger signed "John Melmoth" to the bill, and returned both paper and pen to the cashier. While Castanier was examining the stranger's signature, which went from right to left like that of an Oriental, Melmoth disappeared, making so little noise that when the cashier raised his head he gave a cry, no longer seeing the man, but feeling the pains which our imaginations ascribe to poisoning. The pen which Melmoth had used gave him a hot and stirring sensation in his stomach like that caused by an emetic. As it seemed impossible to

Castanier that the Englishman could have suspected his crime, he ascribed that internal suffering to the palpitation which, according to received ideas, accompanies all evil deeds at the moment of perpetration.

"The devil! what a fool I am! God protects me, for if that fellow had come to-morrow instead of to-night, I'd have been *done for*," said Castanier, throwing into the stove his rejected attempts at forgery, which were instantly consumed.

He then sealed up the one he had selected; took five hundred thousand francs in banknotes from the safe, which he locked; put everything in order; took his hat and umbrella; extinguished the lamp after lighting a candle, and tranquilly left the office to go, as was customary, and give the two keys of the safe to Madame de Nucingen, if the baron happened to be absent.

"You are very lucky, Monsieur Castanier," said the banker's wife, when he entered her room; "Monday is a fête-day, so that you can go into the country if you wish."

"Will you have the kindness, madame, to tell Nucingen that the bill of exchange from the Watschildines which we have been expecting was presented this afternoon? The five hundred thousand francs are paid; therefore I shall not return until Tuesday at twelve o'clock."

"Adieu, monsieur; much pleasure to you."

"And to you the same, madame," replied the old dragoon, leaving the room, and looking as he did so

at a young man then much the fashion, named Rastignac, who was said to be a lover of Madame de Nucingen.

“Madame,” said the young man, when the cashier had closed the door, “that stout individual looks to me like a man who thinks of playing the baron some dishonest trick.”

“Oh no! impossible! he is too stupid!”

“Piquoizeau,” said the cashier, stopping before the porter’s lodge, “why do you let people enter the bank after four o’clock?”

“Ever since four o’clock,” replied the porter, “I have sat here on the sill of the door smoking my pipe, and I know that no one has entered the bank, and no one has left it except the clerks.”

“Are you sure of what you say?”

“As sure as I am of my own honor.”

“Very good,” said Castanier, hastily departing.

The emetic heat imparted by the pen grew more intense.

“Ten thousand devils!” he thought as he crossed the boulevard de Gand, “have n’t I taken every precaution? Let me see. Two clear days, Sunday and Monday; then a day of uncertainty while they search for me. That will give me three safe days and four nights. I have two passports and two different disguises; is n’t that enough to foil the police? I can draw that million in London Tuesday morning before the slightest suspicion is raised here. I leave my debts to my creditors, and am safe and happy for the

rest of my days in Italy as Count Ferraro, that poor colonel whom I alone saw die in the marshes of Zembin, and whose skin I can therefore safely take. But, ha! a thousand devils! Aquilina! if I take her with me she may be recognized. An old fool of a moustache like me to be tied to a petticoat! Why should I take her? I won't; I'll leave her. Yes, I'll have the courage. But — I know myself — I shall be fool enough to come back to her. After all, nobody knows Aquilina in Italy. Shall I take her, or shall I not take her?"

"You will not take her," said a voice that stirred his entrails.

Castanier turned hastily and saw the Englishman.

"The devil is in it!" he cried aloud.

Melmoth had already passed his victim. Though Castanier's first impulse was to seek a quarrel with the man who thus read into his soul, he was a prey to so many contradictory feelings that a sort of momentary inertia overcame him. He therefore did nothing, but fell back passively into that fever of thought natural in a man sufficiently carried away by passion to commit a crime, yet unable to do so without horrible inward agitations. Though fully determined to gather the fruit of that half-consummated crime, Castanier still hesitated to carry out his enterprise, like most men of mixed character, in whom we find as much strength as weakness, and who can be induced to remain pure or become criminal according to the pressure of trivial circumstances. There were many men in the hordes collected by Napoleon who, like

Castanier, had physical courage on a battle-field without the corresponding moral courage which makes a man as great in crime as he might have made himself in virtue.

The letter of credit was written in such terms that on his arrival in London he could draw twenty-five thousand pounds sterling from the Watschildines, correspondents of the house of Nucingen and Co., who were already advised of the letter by himself. His passage was taken by a London agent in a vessel sailing from Portsmouth for Italy under the name of Count Ferraro. The slightest circumstance had been foreseen and provided for. He had arranged matters so that search would be made for him in Belgium and Switzerland while he would be at sea. Then, by the time Nucingen found, if he did find, any traces of him, Castanier would be safely in Naples, where he intended to live under a false name, and so disguised, that he had an acid ready to change his face by pitting it like the small-pox.

But, in spite of all these precautions, which seemed to assure him of impunity, his conscience tormented him; he was afraid. The quiet, peaceful life he had long led had purified his military morals. He was still honest; and he did not disgrace himself without regret. For the last time, he let his mind open to the appeals of the honest nature which struggled within him.

"Pooh!" he said at last, as he turned the corner of the boulevard and the rue Montmartre, "a hackney-coach will take me to Versailles after I leave the

theatre. The post-chaise will be waiting for me at my old quartermaster's, who would let a platoon of soldiers shoot him down before he would betray me. There's no chance against me! Yes, I'll take my little Naqui and start —"

"You will not start," said the Englishman, whose strange voice sent all the cashier's blood to his heart.

Melmoth got into a tilbury which awaited him, and was driven away so rapidly that Castanier saw his enemy a hundred yards distant from him, going up the boulevard Montmartre at a smart trot, before it came into his mind to stop him.

"But — bless my soul!" he said, "the thing is supernatural. If I were fool enough to believe in God, I should think he had set Saint-Michael on my traces. Are the devil and the police watching their time to pounce upon me? Was ever anything like it! — Oh! come, come! this is all nonsense!"

Castanier turned up the rue du Faubourg Montmartre and slackened his pace as he neared the rue Richer. There, in a house lately built, on the second-floor, looking out upon gardens, lived a young girl, known in the neighborhood under the name of Madame de la Garde, who was innocently the cause of the crime committed by Castanier. To explain this fact, and to complete the picture of the crisis beneath which the honesty of the cashier had succumbed, it is necessary to relate succinctly a few of the circumstances of his previous life.

II.

THE CAUSE.

MADAME DE LA GARDE, who concealed her real name from every one, even from Castanier, declared she was a Piedmontese. She was one of those young girls who, either from poverty, or lack of work, or fear of death, often by the betrayal of a first lover, are driven to a career which most of them follow with disgust, many with indifference, some in obedience to the laws of their constitution. At the moment when she was about to fling herself into the gulf of Parisian prostitution at the age of sixteen, still pure, and beautiful as a Madonna, she met Castanier. The old dragoon, too uncouth to have love-affairs in society, and weary of picking up along the boulevards at night some passing *bonne fortune* paid for with money, had long desired to put a sort of order into the irregularity of his habits and morals. Struck by the beauty of this poor child whom accident threw in his way, he resolved to save her from absolute vice for his own profit; the thought was fully as selfish as it was benevolent, but so are the charitable thoughts of even the best men sometimes. Nature is often good, but the social state alloys it with evil; hence certain mixed intentions to which a judge should show himself

indulgent. Castanier had precisely enough intelligence to be shrewd when his own interests were concerned. Consequently, he became a philanthropist, and made the girl his mistress.

“Hey! hey!” said he to himself in his military way, “an old wolf like me mustn’t let himself be fooled by a lamb. Papa Castanier, before you set up a household, reconnoitre the nature of the girl, and see if she is capable of attachment.”

During the first year of this illegal marriage, which placed her in the least reprehensible situation of all those which society condemns, the Piedmontese beauty selected for herself the name of Aquilina, one of the characters in “*Venice Preserved*,” an English tragedy which she had chanced to read. She thought that she resembled that courtesan either by the precocious sentiments she felt in her heart, or by her face, or by the general physiognomy of her person.

When Castanier saw her leading the most regular and virtuous life that is possible to a woman who is outside of all social laws and proprieties, he announced his desire to live with her maritally. She then became Madame de la Garde in order to enter, as far as possible, into the conditions of a real marriage. The fixed idea of many of these poor girls is to endeavor to make themselves accepted as good bourgeois, stupidly faithful to their husbands, capable of being excellent mothers of families, keeping their account-books, and mending the linen of the household. This desire proceeds from so laudable a sentiment that

society ought to take it into consideration. But society will always remain unconvinced in this respect; it will continue to regard the married woman as a corvette, with flag and papers in due order to warrant her course; while the kept mistress is a pirate, to be chased and captured for want of her letters-of-marque.

The day when Madame de la Garde desired to sign herself Madame Castanier, the cashier was angry.

“Then you don’t love me enough to marry me?” she said.

Castanier did not answer, and was gloomy. The poor girl resigned herself. The ex-dragoon was in despair. Naqui was touched by his despair, and would fain have consoled it; but in order to console it she must know its cause. When she resolved to fathom this secret, without, however, asking it, the cashier piteously revealed the existence of a certain Madame Castanier, a legitimate wife, hated a thousand-fold, who lived in Strasburg on a little property, to whom he wrote twice a year, keeping her so carefully concealed that no one knew of his marriage. Why that concealment? Though the reason is known to many military men in the same case, it may not be useless to tell it here.

The genuine trooper — if we may employ a word which is used in the army to denote the men who are doomed to die captains — that serf, attached body and soul to a regiment, is an essentially guileless creature, a Castanier doomed in advance to the scheming of

mothers of families who are frequently found in garrison towns with daughters whom it is difficult to marry. So, at Nancy, during one of those short periods when the imperial army rested, Castanier had the misfortune to pay attention to a young lady with whom he had danced at one of those fêtes called in the provinces *ridottos*, which are often given by the various towns to the officers of the garrison, and *vice versa*. The amiable captain (he was then a captain) became the object of one of those seductions for which mothers find accomplices in the male human heart by touching its various springs, and also among their friends who conspire with them. In common with persons who have but one idea, these mothers bring everything to bear on their great project, a work carefully planned and elaborated like the mound of sand, at the bottom of which lurks on the watch the *formica leo*. Perhaps no one will enter that labyrinth so wonderfully built; perhaps the *formica leo* will die of hunger and thirst. But, if some heedless creature does enter there, there it will stay. The secret calculations of avarice which every man makes in marrying, hope, human vanities, all the wires which make the puppet captain move, were pulled on Castanier. To his sorrow, he had praised the girl to her mother on taking her back at the end of a waltz. Then followed a conversation, with its natural conclusion, an invitation to the house. Once there, the dragoon was dazzled by the comfort of a home where wealth seemed to hide behind affected economy. He was made the object

of adroit flatterers. A dinner, served on plate borrowed from an uncle, the attentions of an only daughter, the gossip of the town brought to his ears, a rich sub-lieutenant seeming about to cut the grass from under his feet, — in short, the thousand traps of the provincial ant-lion were so well set that Castanier was still saying to himself five years later,—

“ Hang me if I know how it was done! ”

The dragoon received fifteen thousand francs and a young woman, who fortunately proved childless. Two years of marriage made her uglier than before, and consequently more peevish. Her complexion, kept white in girlhood by severe dieting, grew blotched; her figure, which had seemed straight, became crooked; the angel turned out to be a grumbling, suspicious creature, who drove Castanier frantic. The dragoon, no longer recognizing the woman he had married, consigned her to a small estate near Strasburg until the happy day when it might please God to take her to paradise. She was one of those virtuous women who, for lack of occasion to do otherwise, torment the angels with their complaints, pray God in a way to exasperate him if he listens to them, and say sweetly the most venomous evil of their husbands as they play their boston nightly with the neighbors.

When Aquilina learned these misfortunes she attached herself sincerely to Castanier, and made him so happy by the varied pleasures that her womanly genius provided for him that, without knowing it, she led the cashier to his doom. Like many women on

whom Nature seems to bestow the fate of going to the depths of the passion of love, Madame de la Garde was disinterested. She wanted neither gold nor jewels; she took no thought for the future; she lived in the present, and especially in its pleasures. The handsome dresses, ornaments, and carriage, so ardently desired by women of her sort, she accepted only as one harmony the more in the picture of their lives. She did not want them to gratify her vanity, nor because she desired to make a show, but simply to better the home. No one could personally do without such things more readily and easily than she.

When generous men (and soldiers are usually generous) meet with women of Aquilina's disposition, they feel a sort of rage at finding themselves inferior to her in the give and take of life. They are capable of stopping a diligence to get the money to provide for her, if they do not possess it themselves. Man is so made. He will sometimes be guilty of a crime to continue grand and noble before a woman. A lover is like a gambler, who thinks himself dishonored if he does not return every penny he has borrowed from the waiter of a gambling-house, all the while committing other wrongs, robbing wife and children, stealing and killing to fill his pockets, but keeping his "honor" safe in the eyes of those who frequent that hell.

Thus it was with Castanier. At first he had installed Aquilina in a modest apartment on a fourth floor, furnished with extreme simplicity. But, on

discovering more and more the fine qualities of the young girl, and receiving from her comforts and pleasures beyond words, he longed to adorn his idol. Before long, Aquilina's dress contrasted so comically with the poorness of her abode that Castanier felt compelled to move elsewhere. This change alone took nearly all his savings, for he furnished the semi-conjugal apartments with the luxury of the period. A pretty woman must, of course, have nothing ugly about her. What distinguishes a pretty woman from other women is this sentiment of homogeneity — one of the least observed needs of our nature; a sentiment which leads old maids to surround themselves with old things. Thus, this delightful Aquilina had the newest and most fashionable articles, and all that the shops afforded that was most coquettish, — rare stuffs, silks, jewels, slender and fragile furniture, beautiful porcelains. She herself asked nothing. Only when it came to a choice, and Castanier said: "Will you have this or that?" she replied: "Why, this is the best!" Love which economizes is not a true love; so, under that idea, Castanier bought only what was best.

This scale of living once established, everything must needs be in harmony with it, — linen, silver, glass, all the accessories of a well-ordered home, kitchen utensils, china, and the devil knows what. Though Castanier endeavored to do things carefully, he saddled himself progressively with debt. One thing necessitated another. A clock needed two

candelabra; the handsome chimney-piece wanted a better hearth; the papers, the hangings, the draperies were too fresh to be ruined by smoke; how much better to put in those newly invented fireplaces warranted by their prospectus to obviate all danger of smoky chimneys. Then Aquilina was so fond of running about her chamber with bare feet that Castanier put carpets everywhere; next, he built a bathroom — always to make his Naqui more comfortable.

The shopkeepers, manufacturers, and workpeople of Paris have an amazing art in widening the hole in a man's purse. When he consults them they never know the price of anything, and as the paroxysm of desire cannot accommodate itself to a delay, the thing is ordered. Thus they obtain customers in the murky darkness of approximate prices; next, they are careful not to send in their bills, and so they draw the consumer unconsciously into the whirlpool of extravagance. All is so charming, ravishing, and everybody is pleased! A few months later, and lo! the complaisant shopkeepers return metamorphosed into totals of horrible importunity; they have wants; they must have payments; they say they are bankrupt; they whine, they weep. The abyss then yawns; it vomits a column of figures which dart up four by four, when, at the worst, they ought to have been three by three.

Before Castanier was aware of the sum total of his debts, he had hired a carriage for his mistress, that she might no longer go out in the street coaches. He himself liked good eating, and he had the best of

cooks; to please him, Aquilina provided the first of everything in its season, — gastronomic delicacies, the choicest wines, all of which she went to the shops and markets and bought herself. The table was therefore a source of heavy expense, considered in relation to the cashier's current means. Hence the ex-dragoon had recourse to commercial artifices to obtain money; for it was, of course, quite impossible that he should renounce his enjoyments. His love for the woman did not suffer him to resist the fancies of the mistress. He was one of those men who, either from vanity or weakness, are unable to refuse a woman; who feel so violent a shame in saying, "I cannot afford; my means are not sufficient," that they will ruin themselves rather than deny her.

Thus it was that when the day came on which Castanier found himself at the bottom of the precipice, and knew that in order to pay his debts honestly he must give up Aquilina and live himself on bread and water, he was so wedded to that woman and to that life that he put off the thought of any reform from day to day. Driven by circumstances, he borrowed money. His position, his antecedents, won him a confidence on which he built up a system of loans which met his more pressing needs. Then, to conceal the sums to which his debts were rapidly amounting, he had recourse to what business men call "circulations." These are notes which represent neither merchandise nor any pecuniary values received, which the first endorser pays for the obliging signer,

— a species of deception tolerated partly because difficult to trace, and partly for the reason that this fantastic fraud does not become an actual fraud except through non-payment.

At last, when Castanier saw the impossibility of continuing his financial manœuvres, owing to the hopeless amount of his debt and the immense sum of interest to be paid upon it, bankruptcy to his creditors stared him in the face. On that day, when dishonor stood before him, he preferred a fraudulent bankruptcy to simple bankruptcy, — crime to misdemeanor. He resolved to discount the confidence his real integrity had won him, and to increase the number of his creditors by borrowing, once for all, the sum necessary to live happy for the rest of his days in a foreign country. And he did what we have seen him do.

Aquilina knew nothing of the anxieties of this life; she simply enjoyed the present, like most women; and no more asked herself where the money came from than the rest of us ask where the wheat was grown that makes our breakfast-rolls, — though the trials, disappointments, and cares of agriculture are as much behind the baker's oven as crushing anxiety and incessant toil are behind the apparent luxury of many a Parisian household.

At the moment when, as we have seen, Castanier was going through the tortures of uncertainty while thinking of an action which would change his whole life, Aquilina, tranquilly seated in her easy-chair

beside the fire, was awaiting him, in company with her maid. Like other maids who serve such women, Jenny was her confidant, having recognized how indestructible was the power which her mistress wielded over Castanier.

"How can we manage to-night? Léon absolutely insists on coming," said Madame de la Garde, reading a passionate letter written on gray paper.

"Here is monsieur!" said Jenny.

Castanier entered. Without being disconcerted, Aquilina rolled up the letter, and taking the tongs, held it in the fire and burned it.

"Is that how you treat your love-letters?" said Castanier.

"Heavens! yes!" replied Aquilina; "isn't that the best way to prevent them from being discovered? Besides, fire should go to fire, as rivers to the sea."

"You say that, Naqui, as if it was a real love-letter."

"Well, don't you think me handsome enough to receive real love-letters?" she said, giving her forehead to Castanier's kiss with a carelessness which would have shown a less blinded man that she was merely performing a sort of conjugal duty; but Castanier had reached a degree of infatuation, inspired by habit, which did not allow him to see anything rightly.

"I have a box for the Gymnase to-night," he said; "let us dine early, so as not to be hurried."

“Take Jenny; I am tired of the theatre. I don’t know what is the matter with me to-night. I want to stay quietly at home in the chimney-corner.”

“No, come with me, Naqui. I sha’n’t bore you much longer, Quiqui. I am going away to-night, to be gone some time. I leave you mistress of everything here. Will you keep me your heart?”

“Neither my heart, nor anything else,” she said. “But whenever you return, Naqui will always be Naqui to you.”

“Well, that’s frankness. Won’t you go with me?”

“No.”

“Why not?”

“Oh!” she cried, laughing, “how could I abandon a lover who writes me such charming notes?”

And she pointed, with a half-mocking gesture, to the ashes of the burned paper.

“Can that be true?” asked Castanier. “Have you really a lover?”

“Have you never seriously considered yourself, my dear?” said Aquilina. “You are fifty years old, in the first place; and you have a face that might be sold on a fruit-stall, for no one could deny it was a pumpkin; when you come upstairs you blow like a grampus, and your stomach shakes and quivers like a mould of jelly. I don’t care if you did once serve in the dragoons; you are an ugly old fellow now; and let me tell you this: I advise you, if you want to retain my respect, not to add to your other qualities the silliness of thinking that a girl like me won’t comfort

herself for your asthmatic love by the flowers of youth."

"You are joking, of course, Aquilina?"

"Well, so were you! Do you take me for a fool that you come here and say in that offhand way, 'I'm going away to-night'? You great goose, would you talk that way if you were really leaving Naqui? No; you would weep big tears, like the calf you are."

"But tell me, if I do go, will you follow me?"

"Tell me first whether this journey isn't all a joke."

"No; seriously, I am going away."

"Well, then, seriously, I stay here. *Bon voyage*, my dear! I'll wait your return. I'd rather quit life than leave my dear, good, little Paris."

"Won't you come to Italy, to Naples, and lead a happy life, all luxury, with your fat old man who puffs like a grampus?"

"No."

"Ungrateful girl!"

"Ungrateful!" she said, rising. "I can leave here this instant, carrying nothing with me but my person. I have given you all the treasures a young girl possesses, and one thing that all your blood and mine cannot give back to me. If I could, by any means whatever, by selling my eternal life, for instance, if I could get back the flower of my body as perhaps I have recovered that of my soul, and give myself pure as a lily to a lover, I would not hesitate an instant. By what devotion have you equalled mine? You have fed

and lodged me as we feed a dog and give him a kennel, because he watches over us and lets us kick him when we are cross, and licks our hands when we call him back and pet him. Which of us two has been the most generous? And you talk to me of ingratitude!"

"Oh! my dear child, don't you see that I was joking?" replied Castanier. "I have to make a little journey, but it won't last long. Come with me to the Gymnase. I shall start at midnight, after I bring you home; let us have a last happy evening together."

"My poor old cat! are you really going?" she cried, taking him round the neck, and pulling his head down into the folds of her gown.

"You are suffocating me!" he cried.

"Jenny," whispered Aquilina in the girl's ear, "go and tell Léon not to come till one o'clock; if you can't find him, and he comes, keep him in your room. Well," she continued aloud, putting Castanier's head before her, and twisting the end of his nose, "I'll go with you, handsomest of grampuses! I'll go to the theatre. But, if so, we will dine at once. There is a good little dinner, — all the things you like best."

"It is very difficult," said Castanier, "to leave a woman like you."

"Then why do you go?" she asked.

"Ah, why? why, indeed? To explain that, I should have to tell you things that would prove my love for you was madness. If you have given me your honor, Naqui, I have sold mine for you; we are quits. Is that loving or not?"

“What of all that!” she cried. “Come, say to me that if I had a lover, you would love me always as a father—that would be loving indeed! Come, say so at once, and give me your paw.”

“I would kill him,” said Castanier, smiling.

They dined, and went to the Gymnase after dinner.

III.

THE COMPACT.

AFTER the first piece was played, Castanier wanted to show himself to various acquaintances whom he saw among the audience, in order to avert suspicion as to his flight as long as possible. He left Madame de la Garde in her box, which was on the lower tier, and went to walk about the foyer. Scarcely had he made a few steps before he encountered Melmoth, whose glance again caused the same heat in his intestines, the same terror in his soul he had already experienced. The two were face to face.

“Forger!” said the Englishman.

Hearing that word, Castanier looked at the persons who were passing them. He fancied he saw surprise mingled with curiosity on their countenances. He wanted to rid himself of the Englishman at once, and he instinctively raised his hand to deal him a blow, but an invincible power paralyzed his arm and rooted him to the ground on which he stood. He was forced to let the stranger take him by the arm, and together they walked down the foyer like friends.

“Who is strong enough to resist Me?” said the Englishman. “Know you not that all things here

below obey me? I do all things; I read all hearts; I see the future, I know the past. I am here, but I can be elsewhere. I depend on neither time nor space nor distance. The world is my slave. I have the faculty of always enjoying, and of always giving enjoyment. My eyes pierce walls, they behold hidden treasures, which I grasp in my hands. At a sign from me palaces are built, and my architects never deceive me. I make the flowers bloom on every soil, I gather precious stones, I heap up gold, I win new women daily. All things yield to me. I could gamble at the Bourse, and always gain, if I had need to do so. Feel, poor miserable creature doomed to shame, feel the power of the grasp that holds you. Try to bend this arm of iron! to soften this heart, hard as a diamond! dare to evade me! If you fly to the caves beneath the Seine, you will hear my voice. If you go to the Catacombs, I shall be there. My voice can rise above the thunder, my eyes dispute with the sun the power to illuminate, for I am the equal of HIM WHO BEARS THE LIGHT!"

Castanier listened to these terrible words. Nothing within him contradicted them; he walked on beside the Englishman, for he felt himself powerless to leave him.

"You belong to me; you have committed a crime," continued his tormentor. "I have found at last the companion I have sought. Would you know your fate? Ha! ha! You came to see a drama; well, you shall, — you shall see two! Come, present me to Madame de la Garde as one of your best friends. Am I not your last hope?"

Castanier returned to his box accompanied by the stranger, whom he presented to Madame de la Garde, in accordance with the order he had received. Aquilina did not seem surprised at the sight of Melmoth. The Englishman refused to sit at the front of the box, and made Castanier resume his place beside his mistress. The simplest wish of this man was an order which had to be obeyed. The piece about to be played was the last. In those days the minor theatres gave three plays. The Gymnase had an actor who was much in vogue. Perlet was now about to play the "*Comédien d'Étampes*," a vaudeville in which he personated four different characters.

When the curtain rose, Melmoth stretched his right hand toward the stage. Castanier gave a cry of terror which was choked as he strove to utter it, for his throat was paralyzed. Melmoth pointed to the stage, making him understand that the scene was changed by his command. The cashier beheld his own office. Nucingen was there in conference with an official from the prefecture of police, who explained to him Castanier's act, — showed him the theft from the safe, the forged letter of credit, and told him of the cashier's flight. A complaint was instantly written, signed, and sent to the public prosecutor.

"Is there still time to arrest him?" asked Nucingen.

"Yes," replied the official; "he is now at the Gymnase and fears nothing."

Castanier moved in his chair, and attempted to rise, he wanted to get away; but Melmoth's hand, laid

upon his shoulder, forced him to remain by an effect of the awful power we have all felt under nightmare. The man was a nightmare in himself; he weighed upon Castanier like a poisonous atmosphere. When the poor cashier turned round to implore the mercy of that Englishman he met a glance of fire which vomited electric currents, metallic sparks. Castanier felt them entering his body, passing through and through him, and paralyzing him where he sat.

“What have I done to you?” he gasped, palpitating like a deer by the side of a brook. “What do you want of me?”

“Look!” said Melmoth.

Castanier cast his eyes upon the stage. The scene had changed. He saw himself getting out of the carriage with Aquilina; but as he opened the door of his house in the rue Richer, the scene changed suddenly once more, and now represented the interior of his apartment. Jenny was talking beside the fire in her mistress’s bedroom with an officer of a regiment of the line then in garrison in Paris.

“Going away, is he?” said this officer. “Then we can be happy at our ease. I love Aquilina too well to share her with that old toad. I intend to marry her.”

[“‘Old toad!’” muttered Castanier, sorrowfully.]

“Here come monsieur and madame!” cried Jenny. “This way, Monsieur Léon; hide there; monsieur won’t stay long.”

Castanier saw the officer conceal himself behind the gowns in Aquilina’s dressing-room. Then he saw him-

self bidding adieu to his mistress, who was mocking him aside to Jenny, while uttering to his face the tenderest and most caressing words. She wept on one side, and laughed on the other.

"Cursed creature!" cried Castanier aloud in the box.

Aquilina was laughing the tears into her eyes as she exclaimed:—

"Oh, heavens! how funny Perlet is as an English-woman! Why don't you laugh?" she said to the cashier. "You are the only person in the whole theatre who is n't laughing. Laugh! laugh, I say!"

Melmoth began to laugh in a way that made the cashier shudder. That laugh wrung his very entrails, and stabbed his brain as if a surgeon had trepanned it with a red-hot iron.

"They laugh! they laugh!" cried Castanier, convulsively.

At this moment, instead of seeing on the stage the prudish lady personated so comically by Perlet, whose Anglo-French speeches were making the audience roar with laughter, Castanier saw himself flying from the rue Richer and bargaining for a hackney-coach on the boulevard to take him to Versailles.

Again the scene changed; he saw the little inn of his old quartermaster. It was two in the morning. A dead silence reigned. No one watched him. The post-chaise was there in waiting. Castanier had his papers, his money, and his passports; he got into the carriage; he was driven away. But at the barrier he

saw the gendarmes awaiting him; they surrounded the carriage. He gave an awful cry, which a glance from Melmoth repressed.

"Look, and be silent!" said the Englishman.

Again Castanier looked on the stage and saw himself at the moment of being thrown into prison. Then followed the fifth act of this drama, entitled "The Cashier." He beheld himself, three months later, issuing from the court of assizes, condemned for twenty years to the galleys. Again the vision changed, and he stood in the courtyard of the Palais de Justice, while the iron of the executioner branded his shoulder. Then came the final scene: he was standing among sixty other convicts at Bicêtre waiting to have his fetters riveted upon him.

"Oh, heavens! I can't laugh any more," cried Aquilina. "How gloomy you are, my old cat! What's the matter with you? Where's your friend? Why, he has gone!"

"Two words, Castanier," said Melmoth outside the door of the box while Madame de la Garde was putting on her wraps.

The corridor was crowded; there was no escape.

"Well, what?" replied Castanier.

"No human power can prevent your taking Aquilina home, and going to Versailles and being there arrested."

"Why so?"

"Because the arm that holds you," said the Englishman, "will not release its grasp."

Castanier would fain have called down upon himself some spell by which to disappear, if need be, to the depths of hell.

“If the devil asked you for your soul, would you give it in exchange for a power equal to that of God? With a single word you can replace in Baron Nucingen’s safe the five hundred thousand francs you stole from it, and then, by tearing up that forged letter of credit, all trace of your crime is obliterated. Besides which, you can have gold in floods. Do you not believe me? Well, if it happens, you will surely believe in the devil.”

“If it were possible —” said Castanier, with a gleam of joy.

“He who can do this,” replied the Englishman, “can do all. Behold!”

Melmoth stretched out his arm at the instant when Castanier, Aquilina, and himself came out upon the boulevard. A fine rain was falling, the pavement was wet, the atmosphere thick, the sky murky. As the arm of that man was put forth, the sun illuminated Paris. Castanier saw the glow of a beautiful July morning. The trees were clothed with leaves, the people were gaily promenading; street-venders cried aloud their wares; equipages rolled along the boulevard. The cashier gave a cry of terror. At that cry, the boulevard was once more damp and dark.

Aquilina was already in the carriage. “Come, do make haste,” she cried. “Either come or stay behind. Really, this evening you are as annoying as the rain itself.”

“What must I do?” said Castanier to Melmoth.

“Will you take my place?” asked the Englishman.

“Yes.”

“Then I will be at your house in a few moments.”

“*Ah ça!* Castanier, you are not yourself,” cried Aquilina. “You are planning some bad deed; you were gloomy and thoughtful during the whole play. My dear friend, is there anything I can do for you? — tell me.”

“I am waiting till we get back to the house to know if you love me.”

“You need n’t wait for that.”

And she threw herself into his arms with apparent passion, and made him those tender caresses which in a woman of her class become a business, like the stage scenes of an actress.

“What music is that?” asked Castanier.

“Music? you are not going to pretend you hear music?”

“Celestial music,” he replied. “The sounds seem to come from above.”

“Nonsense! You who have always refused me a box at the opera on the excuse that you hated music, are you going to turn into a melomaniac at this late day? Upon my word, Castanier, you must be crazy; the music is in your noddle, you distracted old cannon-ball!” she cried, rolling his head on her shoulder. “Listen, papa, it is the wheels of the carriage that are singing.”

“Hear me, Naqui. If the angels do, as they say,

make music before God, it must be they whose melody has entered all my pores as well as my ears; I don't know how to tell you about it — it is sweet as honey."

"Of course the angels make music for the good God, because they are always represented with harps. On my conscience, he's mad!" she said to herself, watching Castanier, who had taken the attitude of an opium-eater in ecstasy.

They reached the house. Castanier, absorbed in all that he had seen and heard, not knowing whether to believe or disbelieve, was like a drunken man, bereft of reason. He roused himself in Aquilina's bedroom, whither he had been half-carried, half-supported by the porter, Aquilina, and Jenny, for he had fainted on leaving the carriage.

"My friends, my friends, *he* is coming!" he said, flinging himself back on the sofa beside the fire.

At this instant Jenny, hearing the bell, opened the door, and presently announced the Englishman as the monsieur who had an appointment with Castanier. Melmoth entered abruptly. Total silence followed. He looked at the porter, and the porter went away. He looked at Jenny, and Jenny disappeared.

"Madame," said Melmoth to Aquilina, "will you permit me to finish an affair which does not admit of a moment's delay?"

He took Castanier by the hand, and Castanier rose. Both went into the salon, where there was no light, but Melmoth's eye lighted the thickest darkness. Fascinated by the strange glance of that unknown man,

Aquilina remained nerveless, incapable of even thinking of her lover, whom she supposed to be shut up in her maid's room, whereas, in truth, surprised by the sudden return of the party, Jenny had hidden him in the dressing-room, as in the scene produced by Melmoth for his victim.

The outer door of the apartment slammed violently, and Castanier presently appeared, alone.

"What is the matter?" cried Aquilina, horrified.

The whole appearance of the cashier had changed. His red complexion had given place to the extraordinary pallor which in the Englishman was so forbidding and terrible. His eyes cast out an awful flame which stabbed with its intolerable brilliancy. Aquilina thought him thinner. His forehead seemed to her majestically horrible, and his person exhaled a dreadful influence which weighed her down like a heavy atmosphere. She felt for a moment oppressed by his presence.

"What has happened in this minute of time between that diabolical man and you?" she asked.

"I have sold him my soul. I feel I am no longer the same. He has taken my being and has given me his."

"How?"

"You could not understand. Ah!" continued Castanier, coldly, "he was right, that demon! I see all, I know all. You have deceived me."

These words frightened Aquilina. Castanier took a candle and went into the dressing-room. The poor girl, stupefied, followed him, and her amazement was

great when Castanier, pushing aside the gowns in her wardrobe, revealed the officer.

"Come, my dear fellow," he said, taking Léon by the button of his coat and leading him into the bedroom.

Aquilina, pale, terrified, threw herself into her usual chair. Castanier sat down on the sofa, leaving the officer to stand before him.

"You are an old soldier," said Léon; "I am ready to give you satisfaction."

"You are a ninny," replied Castanier, coldly. "I have no need to fight. I can kill whom I choose with a glance. I am going to tell you your future, my little man; and you will see why I need not kill you. You have a red line round your neck which I can see; the guillotine awaits you. Yes, you will die on the Place de Grève. You are doomed to the executioner, and nothing can save you. You belong to a branch of the Carbonari. You are conspiring against the government."

"You never told me that," said Aquilina to Léon.

"You do not know," continued Castanier, "that yesterday the ministry determined to unearth your association. The public prosecutor has all your names. The charges against you are now being made out."

"Then it is you who have betrayed him," cried Aquilina, with the roar of a lioness, rising to spring upon Castanier, and rend him.

"You know me too well to think that," said Castanier, with a coolness that petrified his mistress.

"How did you come to know all this?"

"I did not know it till I went into the salon; but now I see all, I know all, I can do all."

The young officer stood like one petrified.

"Well, then, if you can do all, save him, my friend!" cried the young girl, flinging herself at Castanier's feet. "Save him! and I will love you; I will adore you; I will be your slave, and not your mistress. You shall do with me what you will. Yes, I will have more than love for you; I will give you the devotion of a daughter to a father, joined to — oh, hear me! however violent my love may be, I will be only yours! Oh! what can I say to touch you? I will invent pleasures — I — oh, God! — if you want anything of me, if it were even to throw myself from the window, you have only to say 'Léon,' and I would fling myself into hell. I will accept all tortures, all diseases, all griefs, all — all you could impose upon me —"

Castanier remained coldly passive. He merely pointed to Léon and repeated: —

"The guillotine awaits him."

"No, he shall not leave this house; I will save him," she cried. "Yes, I will kill whoever touches him! Why will you not save him?" she went on in a startling voice, her eyes on fire, her hair dishevelled. "Can you?"

"I can."

"Why won't you save him?"

"Why?" cried Castanier, in a voice that rang to the ceiling. "Ha! I avenge myself! It is my business to do evil."

“Die! — he, my lover!” murmured Aquilina. “Oh, it cannot be.”

She bounded to her bureau, and seized a stiletto which was lying in a basket and returned to Castanier, who laughed.

“You know very well a blade cannot hurt me now.”

Aquilina’s arm dropped nerveless, like a harpstring suddenly broken.

“Go, my good friend,” said the cashier, addressing the young officer. “Go and attend to your affairs.”

He stretched out his hand, and the soldier was forced to obey.

“I am here in my own house; I could send for the commissary of police and deliver you up as a man who has introduced himself secretly into my domicile; but I prefer to give you your liberty. I am a demon, but I am not a spy.”

“I shall follow him,” said Aquilina.

“Do so,” said Castanier. “Jenny!”

Jenny appeared.

“Send the porter for a hackney-coach. Here, Naqui,” he added, drawing from his pocket a roll of bank-notes; “you shall not leave a man who still loves you, in a miserable way. Here are three hundred thousand francs.”

And he held out the money to her. Aquilina took the notes and flung them on the ground, spat upon them, and trampled them with the fury of despair, crying out:—

“We will go on foot, without a penny from you—Stay here, Jenny.”

“Good-night,” said the cashier, picking up his money. “Jenny,” he said, looking at the amazed waiting-maid, “you seem to me a good girl. You have no mistress now, but stay here. For to-night at least, you shall have a master.”

Aquilina, doubting the whole thing, went away with the officer to the house of a friend. But it was true; Léon was an object of suspicion in the eyes of the police; he was watched wherever he went, and arrested not long after with three of his friends, according to the newspapers of the day.

The cashier felt himself completely changed, morally as well as physically. The former Castanier—juvenile, lover-like, military, brave, duped, married, disillusioned, turned into a cashier, passionate, and criminal through passion—no longer existed. His interior form had changed. In a moment his brain had enlarged, his senses were magnified. His thought embraced the world; he saw things as if he were placed at an immeasurable distance above them. Before going to the theatre he had felt a most insensate passion for Aquilina; rather than renounce her, he would have shut his eyes to her infidelities. This blind sentiment was now dissipated like a cloud beneath the rays of the sun.

Happy in succeeding to her mistress, Jenny did what the cashier asked of her. But Castanier, who now had the power to read all souls, discovered the true motive

of this purely selfish obedience. Therefore he amused himself at the girl's expense ; with the malicious pleasure of a child, having sucked the cherry he threw away the stone. The next morning at breakfast, when Jenny began to feel herself the mistress of the house, Castanier repeated to her, word for word, thought by thought, what she was saying to herself in her heart as she drank her coffee !

“ Shall I tell you what you are thinking, my girl ? ” he said, smiling. “ It is this : ‘ All this fine furniture in rosewood that I envied so much, and the beautiful gems that I have just tried on will be really mine ! They have cost me nothing but the trifles madame refused him, I am sure I don't know why. Goodness ! to drive in a carriage, and wear jewels, and to go to the theatre in a box, I'd do a great deal more than that, though he is such a fat old porpoise. ’ Is n't that what you are thinking ? ” he added in a voice that made Jenny turn pale. “ Yes, my girl, I know your thoughts, but you don't know mine. And so good-bye to you. We'll part friends.”

And he dismissed her coldly with a very small fee.

IV.

EXPIATION. — REPENTANCE. — ABSOLUTION.

THE first use Castanier resolved to make of the terrible power he had just bought at the price of his eternal salvation was that of the full and perfect satisfaction of his tastes and longings. After putting his business affairs in good order, and making up his accounts with the Baron de Nucingen, who chose as his successor a worthy German, he determined to enjoy a debauch worthy of the finest days of the Roman empire, and he plunged desperately into it like Belshazzar at his last feast.

But, like Belshazzar, he saw distinctly a hand full of light which wrote his doom in the midst of his joys, not on the walls of a narrow hall, but on the boundless spaces where the rainbows arch. His feast was not an orgy confined to the limits of a banquet; it was a prodigality of all forces, all enjoyments. The table was, as it were, the earth itself, and he felt it tremble beneath his feet. It was the last supreme feast of the spendthrift who looks for nothing more. Drawing with both hands from the treasure-house of human sensuality, the key of which the demon had bestowed upon him, he quickly exhausted it. His enormous power, gained and apprehended in an instant, was in the

next instant exercised, estimated, and used up. What had been all was nothing. It often happens that possession kills the loftiest poems of desire, to the dreams of which the object possessed will rarely respond. This inevitable ending of human passions was the fact which Melmoth's omnipotence had successfully concealed. The inadequacy of human nature was suddenly revealed to his successor, to whom the gift of supreme power brought nothingness for its result.

In order to understand the singular situation in which Castanier now found himself, it is necessary to apprehend by thought its rapid evolutions, and to conceive how little lasting they were. Of this it is difficult to give an idea to minds imprisoned by the laws of time, space, and distance.

His magnified faculties changed the relations hitherto existing between the world and himself. Like Melmoth, Castanier could in a moment of time pass on demon wings from the smiling valleys of Hindustan through the deserts of Africa, or the depths of ocean. The lucidity of his mind enabled him to penetrate instantly wherever his eye turned, whether to material objects or human thought; but his tongue lapped up, if one may so express it, in a moment all the savor of that experience, leaving naught behind. His pleasure resembled the axe of despotism, which fells the tree to get the fruit. For him, the transitions, the alternations which apportion joy and grief and vary all human enjoyments, existed no longer. His palate, now become abnormally sensitive, was cloyed and satiated with everything.

Women and good cheer were two pleasures by which he was so glutted that he no longer had even a desire to eat or to love. Knowing himself master of every woman he could wish for, he wished for none; finding them, in advance, irresistibly subjected to his will and his caprices, he felt within him a horrible thirst for the real love; he wanted them more loving than they could be. The one thing the world refused him was faith, prayer,—those two rich and consoling forms of love. He was merely obeyed.

It was a horrible state. The rush of pain, pleasures, thoughts, which shook both his body and his soul, would have annihilated the strongest human creature; but there was in him a supernatural power of life proportioned to the vigor of the sensations that assailed him. He felt within his being something immense which earth could not satisfy. He spent his days in spreading, so to speak, his wings, in longing to traverse the luminous spheres of which he had a clear and despairing intuition. He was starving inwardly; for he hungered and thirsted for that which can neither be eaten nor drunk, yet for which he longed irresistibly. His lips burned with desire, like those of Melmoth; he panted for the UNKNOWN, for he knew all things. Beholding the mainspring and the mechanism of the world, he no longer admired their results. He was filled with that deep contempt which renders the superior man a sphinx who sees all, knows all, and keeps a motionless silence. He felt not the slightest desire to communicate his knowledge to other men. Rich with

the whole of earth, able to cross it at a bound, riches and power no longer meant anything to him. He knew that horrible melancholy belonging to supreme power, which Satan and God may remedy by an activity the secret of which belongs to them alone.

Castanier had not, like his Master, the inextinguishable desire to hate and to do evil. He felt himself a demon, but a future demon ; whereas Satan is a demon past, present, and to come ; nothing can redeem him, he knows it ; and so he finds his pleasure in stirring the worlds with his pitchfork like a dung-heap, and frustrating the designs of God. For his sorrow, Castanier still preserved hope. He went from pole to pole, as a bird flies despairingly from side to side of its cage ; but, having made that bound, like the bird, he saw vast spaces beyond. He had a vision of the Infinite which no longer permitted him to see things human as other men see them. Those madmen who wish for the power of the devil judge it with the ideas of mankind, not perceiving that they will acquire the ideas of the demon in taking his power ; remaining men, they must henceforth live in the midst of their fellows who can no longer comprehend them. The unknown Nero, who dreams of burning Paris for his own excitement (as they give at the theatres fictitious conflagrations), is little aware that Paris would then be no more to him than an ant-hill by the wayside is to a traveller. Sciences, also, were to Castanier what a riddle is to him who knows the word. Kings, governments, statesmen, simply excited his pity.

Thus his great debauch was, in a way, a deplorable farewell to his condition of manhood. He felt himself cramped on the earth; for this infernal power enabled him to share in the evolutions of creation, the causes and the end of which he saw. Feeling himself excluded from that which men have called in all languages heaven, he could no longer think of anything but heaven. He then understood the awful inward parching expressed upon the face of his predecessor; he measured the meaning of that glance illumined by a hope that was ever betrayed; he felt the thirst that burned those scarlet lips; he knew within him the anguish of an eternal combat between two natures thus enlarged. He could still be an angel, but he found himself a demon. He was like those gentle creatures imprisoned by the wicked will of a magician in deformed bodies, who, held by the power of a spell, require the will and effort of others to burst their hated bonds.

Precisely as a man truly great has only the more ardor in searching for the infinite of love in the heart of a woman after one deception, so Castanier found himself suddenly under the weight of a single idea, an idea which perhaps is the key to the higher worlds. From the very fact that he had renounced his eternal salvation, he thought incessantly of the future of those who believe and pray. When, issuing from the debauch in which he took possession of his power, he felt the pressure of that thought, he *knew* the Grief that the sacred poets, the apostles, and the great oracles of faith have depicted for us in words so mighty.

Goaded by the flaming sword that pierced his loins, he rushed to find Melmoth; he wanted to see the subsequent fate of him who had been his predecessor. The Englishman, he knew, lived in the rue Féron, near to the church of Saint-Sulpice, in a dismal house, dark, damp, and chilly. The street, opening to the north like all those that lead perpendicularly from the left bank of the Seine, is one of the gloomiest in Paris, and its character reacts on the houses that line it. When Castanier reached the door of the house, he found it draped in black; the vaulted passage-way behind it was also draped. Within this passage gleamed the lights of a mortuary chapel. A temporary catafalque had been there created, on either side of which was stationed a priest.

"I need not ask monsieur why he comes," said an old portress to Castanier; "he is too like the poor dear man himself. If you are his brother, monsieur, I am sorry you have come too late to see him. The worthy gentleman died two days ago, during the night."

"How did he die?" said Castanier to one of the priests.

"Be comforted," said an aged priest, lifting one side of the black curtain which formed the chapel, and coming forward.

Castanier then saw one of those faces which faith has rendered sublime; through the pores of which the soul seems issuing to shine on other men and warm them by the sentiments of a persistent charity. This man was Sir John Melmoth's confessor.

“Your brother,” continued the priest, “made an end we may all envy, which must indeed have rejoiced the angels. You know what joy is felt in heaven over the redemption of a sinful soul. The tears of his repentance, roused by the grace of God, never ceased to flow; death alone could quench them. The Holy Spirit was with him. His ardent, fiery words were those of a prophet-king. If never in the course of my life I have listened to so horrible a confession as that of this Irish gentleman, never also have I heard such passionate prayers. However great may have been his sins, his repentance covered up that yawning gulf in a moment. The hand of God was visibly stretched over him; he no longer resembled himself, so sacredly beautiful did he seem. His eyes, once terrible, were softened by tears; his voice, so vibrant and so startling, had the grace and gentleness we notice in the speech of humbled men. He edified all who heard him, so that they fell on their knees as he glorified God, telling of his infinite greatness and mercy and relating the things of heaven. If he has not left worldly goods to his family, he has at least obtained for you the greatest good a family can possess: I mean a sainted soul, which will forever watch over you and lead you in the path of right.”

These words produced so violent an effect upon Castanier that he turned away abruptly, and walked in the direction of the church of Saint-Sulpice under the influence of a species of fatality; the repentance of Melmoth had dumfounded him.

At this particular period, a man famous for his eloquence was holding conferences on certain days, the object being to show the truths of the Catholic religion to the youth of the country, said, by other lips not less eloquent, to be indifferent to matters of faith. The conference on this day had preceded the funeral services of the Englishman. Castanier entered the church just as the preacher was summing-up, with that gracious unction and penetrating speech which distinguished him, a statement of the proofs of immortal happiness.

The old dragon, in spite of the demon that now possessed him, was, in himself, under conditions that fitted him to receive fruitfully the divine word uttered by the preacher. If there is any phenomenon well-proved, it is the moral phenomenon which the people call the *foi du charbonnier*. The strength of this belief will be found in exact ratio to the greater or less usage man makes of his reason. Simple people and soldiers are as Castanier was in this respect. Those who have marched through life under the banner of instinct are much more receptive of light than those whose minds and hearts are wearied by the sophistries of life.

From the age of sixteen until he was forty, Castanier, a Southerner by birth and nature, had followed the French flag. A simple trooper, obliged to fight to-day, to-morrow, and the next day, his business was to think of his horse before he thought of himself. During his military apprenticeship he therefore had no time in which to reflect on the future of mankind. As an officer he was busy with his soldiers, and thus he went from

battlefield to battlefield without ever thinking of the morrow of death. Military life requires but few ideas. Soldiers march ahead, obeying passively the mind which commands them, killing the enemy before them, as the woodsman cuts down the trees of a forest. They pass continually from a state of violence which requires the employment of their utmost physical strength to a state of repose; they fight and drink, they fight and eat, they fight and sleep, the better to fight again. In this sort of whirlwind the mind gets little exercise. The moral being remains in its native simplicity. When these men, so energetic on the battlefield, return to civilization, most of those who remain in the lower ranks are without acquired ideas, without faculty, and without any definite aims. When old soldiers are thus, their souls, virgin of reason and argument, will readily obey a strong impulsion. The crime committed by Castanier is one of those acts which raise so many questions that, in order to discuss it, the moralist must call for a *division*, to use the parliamentary term. This crime was brought about by passion, by one of those infatuations for a woman which are so cruelly irresistible that no man can dare to say: "*I could never do that.*"

The word of life fell therefore upon a conscience new to the religious truths which the French Revolution and military life had obscured in Castanier. A terrible word uttered by the preacher, "You will be happy or you will be unhappy to all eternity," struck the more powerfully on his mind because, having now sucked the

earth and shaken it like a tree that bore no fruit, in the omnipotence of his unsatisfied desire it was enough that one spot in earth or heaven should be denied to him to make him long for it. If we may compare such great things with petty social follies, he was like a rich banker whom nothing resists in society, but who, not being admitted to the rank of nobility, counts all social privileges as nothing because that one is lacking to him. This man, Castanier, more powerful than all the kings of the earth united, who could, like Satan, make war with God himself, leaned against a pillar in the church of Saint-Sulpice, bending under the weight of a new sentiment, absorbed in a thought of the future which was denied him, but to which Melmoth himself had passed.

“He is happy!” cried Castanier; “he died with the certainty of going to heaven.”

In a moment, a vast change took place in the ideas of the late cashier. After being a demon for several days, he fell back into being a man, — an image of the primitive fall revealed in all cosmogonies! But, though becoming once more small in form, he had acquired a cause of inward greatness, — he had bathed in the Infinite. The infernal power given to him had revealed to him the divine power. His thirst for heaven was greater than his hunger for earthly sensualities — so quickly exhausted — had ever been. The pleasures the demon promised were those only of earth enlarged; whereas the joys of heaven were illimitable. The man believed in God. The gift which had delivered to him

the treasures of the world no longer was of value to him ; those treasures seemed as despicable to his mind as the pebbles of the earth to one who loves diamonds, — the glass beads of savages compared with the eternal beauties of the unseen life. To him, this power that he held from that strange source was now accursed.

He stood there, plunged in this abyss of darkness and lugubrious thoughts, listening to the services held over Melmoth. The *Dies iræ* appalled him. *He* could comprehend, in all its grandeur, that cry of the repentant soul trembling before the Majesty Divine. Suddenly he was conquered by the Holy Spirit, as straw is consumed by fire. Tears flowed from his eyes.

“Are you a relation of the deceased?” asked the beadle.

“His heir,” replied Castanier.

“Please to pay for the costs of the service.”

“No,” said Castanier, who would not give the devil’s money to the Church.

“For the poor?”

“No.”

“For the repairs of the church?”

“No.”

“For the chapel of the Virgin?”

“No.”

“For the seminary?”

“No.”

Castanier left the church to avoid the angry eyes of several of the church people.

“Why” — he said to himself, contemplating Saint-

Sulpice — “ why have men built these gigantic cathedrals which I have seen in every land? That sentiment, shared by the masses throughout all time, must rest on something.”

“ Do you call God something?” said his conscience.
“ God! God! God! — ”

That word, repeated by an inward voice, crushed him; but instantly his sensations of terror were soothed by the exquisite notes of a distant music he had vaguely heard for some little time. This harmony, he thought, was in the church, and he looked toward the portal. But, he then perceived, listening attentively, that the sounds came from everywhere about him. He looked to the street, the square, but he saw no musicians. Yet though this melody brought to his soul the azure poesies and distant lights of hope, it gave more poignancy to the remorse which tortured him, and he went his way through Paris like one overwhelmed with grief. He looked at everything but saw nothing; he walked, like an idler, aimlessly; he stopped without motive; he talked to himself; he would not have stepped aside to avoid a falling plank or a carriage-wheel. Little by little, insensibly, repentance brought him to that Mercy which kneads the heart so gently, yet so terribly. Presently there came into his face, as into that of Melmoth, something grand and unspeakable, — a cold expression of sadness like that of a man in despair, mingled with the breathless yearning of a new hope; but, above all, disgust for the gifts of this low world. His glance, dreadful with light,

covered the humblest prayers. He suffered now in proportion to his power. His soul, violently shaken, bowed down his body as a rushing wind bends the tall pines. He could not refuse to live, for he would not die beneath the yoke of hell. His torture became intolerable to him.

At last, one morning, he remembered that Melmoth, now in heaven, had proposed to him to take his place, and that he had taken it; doubtless other men would do the same, and thus he might, at a period when fatal indifference to religion was proclaimed on all sides, meet with some man willing to submit to the terms of the contract to gain its powers.

"There is one spot," he thought, "where they quote the price of kings, and weigh the peoples, and judge systems; where governments, and ideas, and beliefs are marked with a price, and all can be discounted; where God himself makes loans, and gives as security his revenue of souls, for the pope keeps a current account there. Surely if I can find a soul to buy, it is there."

And Castanier went to the Bourse, thinking to trade for a soul as they do in that place with the public funds. An ordinary business man would naturally consider that he was making fun of him, but Castanier knew by experience that everything is serious to a man in despair. Like one condemned to death, who would listen to a madman if he told him he could squeeze through the key-hole of his cell door, he who suffers is credulous; he will seize an idea and not abandon it

until it fails, like a branch that breaks beneath the grasp of a drowning man.

Towards four o'clock, Castanier appeared among the groups that were forming after the closure of the market for the public funds. He was known to many of the negotiators then present, and he could, by seeming to be in search of some one, mingle among them and listen to the rumors that were, as usual, current about men in difficulties.

"Not I," said one stout banker; "none of that Claparon paper for me! if you have any you'll have to carry it."

The man named Claparon was then on the ground, in close conference with a money-lender well-known for his usurious discounts. Castanier at once turned and walked in the direction of Claparon, a broker well-known for risking great strokes which might either ruin or enrich him.

As Castanier came up beside the speculator, the usurer had just left him, and the unlucky man had made unconsciously a gesture of despair.

"So, Claparon, my friend, you have a hundred thousand francs to pay to the Bank, and it is almost four o'clock! All is known, and you haven't much time to arrange your little failure," said Castanier.

"Monsieur!"

"Speak low," said the cashier. "Suppose I were to propose to you a stroke of business by which you could pick up as much money as you want?—"

“It would n’t meet my payments ; for I know of no business that does n’t take time to cook.”

“I know of one affair that would pay you instantly,” said Castanier, “but it would oblige you to —”

“What?”

“Sell your share in paradise. But that’s a bit of business like any other. We are all shareholders in the great enterprise of eternity.”

“Don’t you know that I am capable of slapping your face?” said Claparon, angrily ; “it is not permissible to make silly jokes to a man in trouble.”

“I am speaking seriously,” said Castanier, taking from his pocket a roll of bank-notes.

“In the first place,” said Claparon, “I won’t sell my soul to the devil for a song. I want five hundred thousand francs to —”

“Did I talk of driving a bargain?” said Castanier, roughly. “You can have more gold, if you choose, than the Bank vaults can hold.”

So saying, he held out a mass of notes which decided the speculator.

“Done !” said Claparon ; “but how will you manage it?”

“Come over there, where there is no one,” replied Castanier, pointing to a solitary spot in the courtyard.

Claparon and his tempter exchanged a few words with their faces turned to the wall. None of the persons who remarked them would have guessed the object of this aside, although they were greatly puzzled

by the oddity of the gestures which were made by the contracting parties.

When the pair returned, a murmur of astonishment broke forth on all sides. As always happens in French assemblages, where the least unusual event instantly attracts attention, all eyes were turned to the two men who had excited this notice, and they saw, not without horror, the change that had taken place in both of them. At the Bourse every one walks about and converses, consequently all the actors on the scene are soon recognized and observed; for the Bourse is like a *bouillotte* table, where clever men know how to guess the play of a gambler and the state of his exchequer from his countenance. Every one, therefore, had already remarked the appearance of Claparon and Castanier. The latter, like Melmoth, was powerful and mighty; his eyes shone, his flesh was vigorous. All who saw him were astonished at his aspect, so majestically terrible, and asked themselves how it was that that good old Castanier had obtained it. But now, on returning from his conference with Claparon, Castanier, deprived of his power, looked faded, wrinkled, aged, decrepit. As he went to that corner of the courtyard dragging Claparon after him, he had seemed like a man in the flush of fever, or in the moment of exaltation produced by opium; but now, on returning, he was in the condition of exhaustion that follows fever, in which it usually happens that the patient dies, or else in the awful prostration caused by an excessive use of a narcotic. The infernal spirit which had enabled him to bear his

mighty debauch had fled ; the body was left exhausted, helpless, without support against the assaults of remorse and the burden of a true repentance. Claparon, on the contrary, whose anxiety had been so visible, came back with flashing eyes bearing on his face the pride of Lucifer. Bankruptcy had passed from one face to the other.

“Die in peace, old fellow,” said Claparon to Castanier.

“For God’s sake, send for a carriage and a priest, — the vicar of Saint-Sulpice,” said Castanier, sitting down upon a stone post.

Those words “a priest” were heard by several persons, and gave rise to a jeering “Ha ! ha !” echoing among that crowd of men who reserved their faith for bits of paper called notes and coupons representing estates. The Grand-livre is their Bible.

“Have I the time to repent?” Castanier asked himself in a lamentable voice that struck even Claparon.

The dying man was removed in a hackney-coach.

The speculator paid off his notes at the bank. The impression produced on the crowd by the sudden change in the appearance of the two men was effaced as the wake of a vessel is lost in the ocean. Some news of the highest importance excited the attention of the business world. At that hour, when all interests were at a stake, Moses himself, appearing with his luminous horns, would not obtain more than the honors of a pun, and would surely be rejected by men engaged in getting the right quotations.

When Claparon had paid his notes fear took possession of him. He was convinced of his power, and he returned to the Bourse to offer his bargain to some other embarrassed speculator. The investment on the Grand-livre of hell and the rights attached thereto (as the notary to whom Claparon sold them remarked) brought the good round sum of seven hundred thousand francs. The notary then resold them for five hundred thousand francs to a builder, who in turn got rid of them for two hundred and fifty thousand to an ironmonger; and he, again, conveyed them to a carpenter for fifty thousand less than they had cost him. At last, by five o'clock in the afternoon nobody believed in this queer compact; the purchasers themselves had lost all faith in it.

At half-past five o'clock the then possessor was a house-painter, who was leaning against the door of the temporary Bourse, then in the rue Feydeau. This painter, a simple-minded man, did not know what was the matter with him. He was "all put about," as he remarked to his wife on reaching home.

The rue Feydeau is, as idlers know, one of those streets adored by young men who, in default of a mistress, make love to the whole sex. On the first floor of a bourgeois-looking house lived one of those handsome creatures to whom heaven has been pleased to grant rare beauty, and who, unable to be duchesses and queens, for the reason that there are more pretty women in the world than titles and thrones, are forced to content themselves with bankers and brokers, whose

happiness they make at a fixed price. This young woman, named Euphrasie, was an object of ambition to the young clerk of a certain notary. The clerk would willingly have murdered the pope and the sacred college of cardinals to obtain the paltry sum of two thousand francs with which to buy a shawl desired by Euphrasie, in return for which her maid had promised to procure him an interview. The lover went and came under the windows of Madame Euphrasie, like the polar bears in their cage at the Jardin des Plantes. His right hand was slipped through his waistcoat grasping his heart, which he would fain have torn out, though he actually did no more than twist his braces.

“What can I do to get ten thousand francs?” he cried. “Shall I take them out of the money I am to carry with that conveyance? It wouldn’t ruin the purchaser if I did — a man worth millions! I could go to-morrow and say to him: ‘Monsieur, I took ten thousand of your money; I am twenty-two years old, and I love Euphrasie; that’s my history. My father is rich; he will pay you back; don’t ruin me! Were *you* never twenty-two years old and madly in love?’ Ah! but those damned capitalists never have any soul! He is capable of sending for the police instead of pitying me. Heavens! if I could only sell my soul to the devil! But there’s neither God nor devil; all that is nonsense — superstition — old women’s tales! Oh! what can I do?”

“If you will really sell your soul to the devil,” said the house-painter, who was passing as the clerk had

uttered those words, "you can have your ten thousand francs."

"And Euphrasie!" cried the clerk, seizing the bargain proposed to him by the devil in the form of a house-painter.

The compact made, the young madman bought the shawl and went to Madame Euphrasie. There, being beside himself with love, he stayed twelve days spending his whole paradise, thinking only of love and its orgies, in the midst of which he drowned the thought of hell, and all his new privileges.

The enormous power gained by the discovery of Melmoth, a son of the venerable Mathurin, was thus lost to the world. It became impossible for certain orientalists, mystics, and archæologists who concern themselves in such matters, to record historically the method employed to evoke the demon; and for this reason:—

On the thirteenth day of his wild debauch, the clerk was lying exhausted on his pallet in the garret of his master's house in the rue Saint-Honoré. Shame, that stupid goddess who dares not look at herself, had laid hold of the young man, who was now ill. He thought to cure himself, and mistook the proper use of a drug discovered by the genius of a man whose name may be seen on all the walls of Paris. The clerk accordingly died from the effects of too much quicksilver, and his body turned as black as that of a mole. Some devil had certainly passed that way; but which of them? Was it Astaroth?

"That estimable young man has been transported to the planet Mercury," said the head clerk of the notary's office to a German demonologist, who had come to inquire into the particulars of this affair.

"I can well believe it," replied the German.

"Ah!"

"Yes, monsieur," continued the learned man, "what you tell me agrees with the statement of Jacob Bœhm in his forty-eighth proposition in 'The Triple Life of Man,' in which he says: 'If God has performed all things by the FIAT, the FIAT is the secret matrix which contains and holds the nature formed by the Spirit that is born of Mercury and of God.'"

"Excuse me, you say, monsieur? —"

The German repeated his words.

"We don't know about that," said the clerks.

"*Fiat!*" said one clerk. "*Fiat lux!*"

"You can convince yourself of the truth of my citation," pursued the German, "by reading the second clause of page 75 in the treatise on 'The Triple Life of Man,' printed in 1809 by Monsieur Migneret, and translated by a philosopher, a great admirer of the illustrious shoemaker."

"Ah! was he a shoemaker?" said the head clerk.

"Just think of that!"

"In Prussia," replied the German.

"Did he make shoes for the king?" asked a Bœotian of a second clerk.

"He ought to have put strings to his sentences," said the third clerk.

“That man is pyramidal!” declared the fourth clerk, pointing to the German.

Though the latter was a demonologist of the first rank, he had no conception what mischievous young devils the clerks in a lawyer’s office are. He walked away, not perceiving their jokes, but convinced that those young men thought Jacob Boehm a pyramidal genius.

“There’s a great deal of education in France,” he said to himself.

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I L L U S T R A T E D
